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THE

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Edited by the Rev,

W. ROBERTSON NICOLL, M.A., LL.D.

Editor of "The Expositor

DR. JAMES ORR'S

THE RITSCHLIAN THEOLOGY AND THE EVANGELICAL FAITH

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THE RITSCHLIAN THEOLOGY AND THE EVANGELICAL FAITH

BY

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"If we have rightly designated the essence of Christianity, we may comfort ourselves by saying that the nearer the system of a systematic theologian approaches to a metaphysic, the farther it removes itself from Christianity."—HOFMANN, *quoted by* HERRMANN.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

IN issuing this little book, which aims at being, within the limits assigned, as objective a presentation of the Ritschlian Theology as is possible to one who, while conscious of having benefited by its teaching, does not share the standpoint of the school, the author desires to express his thanks to the Rev. Wm. M'Gilchrist, B.D., Ardrossan, for his kindness in aiding in the revision of the proofs, and for frequent helpful suggestions.

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IT is proposed in these pages to study a movement, the rapid rise, extensive spread, and dominant influence of which admittedly constitute it the most remarkable phenomenon in the recent history of religious thought. Scarcely a quarter of a century has elapsed since the publication of Albrecht Ritschl's monumental work on *Justification and Reconciliation* (1870-74), and Ritschl himself only passed from the scene in 1889, yet already his disciples hold chairs in all the leading Universities

in Germany, and the ideas, and still more the spirit, of his teaching are recognised as the reigning influences in Continental theology, and are rapidly penetrating theological thought in Britain and America as well. This alone renders it desirable that the attempt should be made to furnish some more complete and satisfactory account of this movement than yet exists in English, and that, along with this, there should be the endeavour to come to some understanding with it as to its bearings on, and relations to, what is commonly known as the Evangelical Faith.

It is not, however, the outward success only of the new theological movement which excites our curiosity to become better acquainted with it. The claims it makes for itself not less provoke inquiry and invite criticism. For Ritschlianism also professes to be an evangelical theology—nay, the only pure evangelical theology in existence. It is an axiom of the school that the Church has erred from well-nigh the beginning of its history in its apprehension of Christ's Gospel;* that, misled by a false intellectualism, the result of its Hellenic environment,† it early committed the mistake of converting the simple

* Even the Apostles, Ritschl holds, lapsed from Christ's point of view in losing hold of the idea of the Kingdom of God, and giving their teaching an eschatological turn.—*R. und V.*, ii., pp. 295–7; iii., p. 270 (3rd Edit.).

† On the influence of the Hellenic spirit on Christianity, and its effects, see especially the works of Harnack, Kaftan, Herrmann; and in English, Hatch's Hibbert Lectures on *The Influence of Greek Ideas*, etc. On the other side, cf. H. Bois, *Le Dogme Grec.*

utterances of faith into metaphysical dogmas—thus stamping on them a character alien to their true nature; and this unhappy mixture of philosophy with theology has continued to be the distinguishing mark of theological systems since. Even the Reformers, it is contended, very imperfectly understood the bearings of their own principles, and failed to rescue Christianity from this bondage to alien modes of thought into which it had fallen *; while later Protestantism, so far from rectifying the evil, relapsed into the worst vices of the pre-Reformation period, and developed a scholasticism of its own. Now, however, it is claimed, with the advent of Ritschl, a better era has dawned. The root of the error in which the Church has been so long entangled has been laid bare; the true principle and genuine sequence of the thoughts in Christ's religion have been seized; the possibility of a theology adequate in form and content to the pure original Evangel has for the first time been created.†

* Ritschlianism claims to be the true Lutheranism, but only in the spirit, not in the letter. "The ideas of the Reformation," Ritschl boldly declares, "were more concealed than disclosed in the theological works of Luther and Melanchthon." —*Drei akad. Reden*, p. 18. Melanchthon nearly always appears in Ritschl's references as a sort of marplot of the Reformation. "In the Melanchthonian theology, the reformatory ideas of Luther had no place."—*Ibid.*, p. 18. And Melanchthon is the founder of the Lutheran orthodoxy.—*R. und V.*, i., pp. 478, 603 (E. T., pp. 452, 572). Herrmann is careful to explain that it is Luther the Reformer, not Luther the scholastic, to whom he attaches himself.—*Verkehr*, p. 131, 2nd edit. (E. T., p. 127).

† This hardly exaggerates the tone of Ritschl's more enthusi-

These claims, it will be allowed, are sufficiently startling—probably since the days of the Hegelian speculative "orthodoxy" no school has pitched its pretensions on quite so high a key—but it must also be owned that they are not put forward without a very considerable knowledge and ability being displayed on their behalf. In estimating the causes of the success of the Ritschlian movement, a large space must always be assigned to the personality of Ritschl himself. The bitterest opponents of Ritschl do not deny to him the credit of being a historian, exegete, and systematic theologian of the first rank.* We shall see afterwards how singular was his mental history—how, in a sense, he passed through, and incorporated in himself, all the important phases of thought in his generation. He was a man of strongly marked individuality, forceful and masterly in disposition, pronounced in his sympathies and

astic disciples, especially in the earlier period. The tone is since somewhat modified. Kattenbusch in his *Von Schleier. zu Ritschl* speaks only of Ritschl as inaugurating a new "phase" of the movement founded by Schleiermacher (p. 17). But all are emphatic in declaring that they have learned more from Ritschl than from any other living teacher.

* Lemme, formerly a pupil, afterwards a critic, says: "Ritschl was a historian of dogma of the first rank . . . There is scarcely an epoch of Church history on which new light has not been cast by his investigations. He was, further, a critic of rare acuteness, whose exhaustive treatment of theological notions has scarcely had its equal. In both relations Ritschl has given a powerful impetus to German theology."—*Die Prinzipien*, etc., p. 59. Frank, Bertrand, Schoen, Pfleiderer, Nippold, etc., bear similar testimony to Ritschl's historical and exegetical, but specially to his systematic gifts.

antipathies, exacting in his demands on the allegiance of his followers,* yet capable, as his class-room showed, of impressing himself by the energy of his character and originality of his teaching on a multitude of talented minds.† His works, difficult and cumbrous as they are in style, irresistibly produce upon the reader the same impression of power, originality, and penetrative, if frequently arbitrary, judgment; while the system of thought unfolded in them is characterised by a certain massive unity—massive, often, rather than internally compact or clear—vast but vague, like mountains looming through mist, with clefts and gaps between, which the haze floating over them does not permit us always distinctly to perceive. The impulse thus communicated has been diffused and perpetuated by a band of pupils and admirers—many of them men of brilliant parts, who, grateful for the benefit they have received, have thrown themselves with rare devotion, and no small measure of polemical zeal, into the task of working out, popularising, and defending the ideas of the new theology, and of justifying them by a critical study of the past.

The ablest advocacy, however, would not have

* Already at Bonn he sought to develop, though as yet without the desired success, what he calls "a certain specific fidelity to myself."—*Leben*, i., p. 409.

† Ritschl's son says of him, he was a man "of one mould" (*aus einem Gusse*), and lays stress on his concentration of purpose and strongly pronounced character, by which he "repelled many, while on others, to whom he was more closely knit by likeness of feeling and kinship of aim, he exercised all the more powerful an attraction."—Cf. the whole sketch, *Leben*, i., pp. 1, 2.

secured for Ritschlianism the success it has attained, had it not been that there were elements in the system itself which enabled it to appeal in a direct and palpable fashion to deep-lying tendencies and needs of the age in which it had its birth. The more narrowly the new movement is scrutinised, the clearer it becomes that its peculiar attractiveness lies just in this, that in its distinctive watchwords it strikes chords which are already vibrating in the intellectual and spiritual atmosphere around us,—that, addressing itself to an age profoundly distrustful of reason in its metaphysical flights, enamoured of the methods of the positive sciences, yet craving a ground of religious certainty which neither philosophy nor science can give, it mirrors back to that age with unerring fidelity its own dissatisfactions and desires.* In Germany, the great speculative movement of the earlier part of the century had broken down, and the reaction in favour of a strict demarcation of the limits of reason found its expression in the cry "Back to Kant." The experimental sciences, in the flush of their triumphs, had held out hopes of a certainty in knowledge, and assurances of progress, but these also had not been realised. Instead, a bold materialism,

* Pfleiderer declares that the peculiar significance of the Ritschlian system lies in the fact that it is "the theological expression and mirror of the general consciousness of the time, according to its strong and legitimate, but also its weak and dangerous sides."—Quoted in Nippold, *Einzelschule*, ii., p. 1; cf. Schoen, pp. 7–9. The tendency to distrust reason, and to base religion on some non- or ultra-rational foundation, finds contemporary illustration in such works as Mr. Balfour's *Foundations of Belief*, and Kidd's *Social Evolution*.

pressing in like a flood, threatened the foundations of moral life; a gaunt pessimism, raising its head amidst the wreck of old beliefs, mocked the dreams of advancement. The religious instinct, refusing to be stilled, yearned for a satisfaction in a region where reason could not intrude with its questionings, nor science enter with its doubts. The Ritschlian teaching could not but powerfully appeal to all who, consciously or unconsciously, had come under these influences of the time-spirit. It fell in with the prevailing distaste for metaphysics by confining the theoretic domain to phenomena, and dissolving all connection between religion and philosophy; it accentuated the weariedness of scholastic dogma by declaring past theology a failure, and offering a new interpretation of Christianity which should be beyond challenge; it met the positive spirit of the age by professing to derive everything from historical Revelation in Christ, and by cutting off all transcendental considerations; it harmonised with the social tendency of the time in giving prominence to the practical and ethical ideal of the Kingdom of God; it conciliated the ecclesiastical tendency by the stress it laid on the doctrine of the Church, and by its boast to be the true Lutheranism;* it was anti-mystical, yet was capable of kindling an enthusiasm almost mystical in its fervour in the breasts of its disciples;† it could

* Kattenbusch speaks of the "Plerophorie" with which Ritschl vindicates the Lutheran character for himself.—*Von S. zu Ritschl*, p. 79.

† J. Weiss says truly that the warmth of Herrmann recalls that of the best days of Pietism.—*Die Nachfolge Christi*, p. 130.

appeal to the philosophical and scientific interests themselves, for, as we shall see, it agreed with them in their striving after unity of view—after a "Weltanschauung"—and in its claim to furnish a solution of the "world-problem."*

This last remark leads to the notice of a point of considerable importance for the right understanding of the Ritschlian theology—at least of that of Ritschl himself. Those who imagine that because Ritschl is constantly tilting against the theology of the Church, he has any objection to theology as such, or disbelief in the possibility and need of a scientific treatment of Christian doctrines, make the profoundest of mistakes. Ritschl was in every nerve and fibre of his being a systematic theologian.† Christianity was to him no vague sentiment, to be shaped into any arbitrary moulds men's fancies pleased, but enclosed within itself a definite, coherent body of truth about God, the world, and the world-end;‡ and theology, for the

* Thus Ritschl: "The religious view of the world in Christianity is the means for the solution of the world-problem generally."—*R. und V.*, iii. p. 268; cf. pp, 190, 215, etc.

† See below, p. 25. Kattenbusch says of him that "he was entirely a systematic theologian, even when he appeared as a historian" (in Nippold, i., p. 254: cf. ii., p. 1). So Mielke speaks of him as "the most important systematic theologian of the new time" (Introd. to his *System A. Ritschl's*).

‡ A "geschlossene Weltanschauung," as he phrases it (*R. und V.*, iii. p. 191). His biographer says that he laid great stress on the idea "that in scientific knowledge there should not only be a knowledge of each particular in its own kind, but that the parts should be apprehended in their connection with one another, and in the right relation of the whole to its parts and of the parts to their whole," and adds that "for this

same reason, is no thing of "shreds and patches," but has for its task to grasp, and scientifically to exhibit, this religious and moral view of the world involved in Christianity, and to show how and why it answers to the religious need. Its express function, as he defines it, is to present each element of Christian truth in its inseparable connection with the unity of the whole.* The reproach he casts on other theologians is that they are "fragmentists,"† and he specially blames his opponents that they attack his system in detail without having the capacity to grasp it as a whole.‡ He regarded it as his peculiar merit that he had succeeded in exhibiting this "total view" of Christianity,§ in its entirety, and in the correct relation of its parts, where others had failed. His disciples, it is to be granted, are not all of one mind with him on this matter. While in the main they may be said to adhere to the position that a theology is a necessity for the thought and life of the Church, and hold, with Kaftan, that the want of the age is not to get rid of dogma, but the evolution of "a new dogma"‖—

reason he insisted so much that above all things Christianity should be represented as a self-contained and unified view of the world (*eine in sich geschlossene einheitliche Weltanschauung*)" (*Leben*, ii., p. 184). Ritschl's mind was probably dominated more than any other in his generation by this idea of a "whole" of truth in Christianity.

* *R. und V.*, iii., p. 15.

† *Leben*, ii., p. 183.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 385.

§ "Gesammtanschauung."—*R. und V.*, iii., p. 33.

‖ This is the point of Kaftan's controversy with Dreyer, author of *Undogmatisches Christenthum*. Cf. his *Brauchen*

still apparently to seek,—there is an important section of the school whose bias is distinctly anti-dogmatic, or for whom dogma—even if acknowledged to be in some sense a necessity—is simply the fluent and ever-varying expression of the Christian "life." *

We are far from insensible to the many incidental merits of the Ritschlian theology, and cordially acknowledge the freshening influence it has had on all historical and doctrinal studies. In this influence, taken by itself, there is much to be grateful for. When, however, it is asked whether, for the sake of the good it contains, criticism of the defects and weaknesses of the theology ought not to be foregone, we demur. There is a feeling in many minds that the faults of the Ritschlian theology lie mainly on the surface—relate chiefly to modes of conception and expression— and may readily be pardoned in view of the soundness of the system at its core. This, we are persuaded, is nearly an inversion of the actual state of the case. It is the first look of the system that is plausible; only when we get a little further down, and begin to apprehend it in its inwardness—to see

wir ein neues Dogma? and article "Glaube und Dogmatik," in *Zeitschrift für T. und K.*, 1891.

* This is the tendency specially in the French and Swiss sections of the school, represented by Sabatier, Astié, Dandiran, etc. Christianity is "life," and "dogma" is the ever-varying product of that "life." Herrmann, in his *Verkehr*, looks at least in this direction (pp. 6–10), while Harnack upholds the view that Christianity has a definite content which it is the business of dogma to unfold. Cf. the new paragraph against Sabatier in *third* edit. of his *Dogmengeschichte* (E. T., i., p. 22).

the foundations on which it rests, the ideas which control it, the sense it puts on individual doctrines —do we become aware how impossible it is for the Church ever to accept it as a satisfactory interpretation of its faith. The balancing of merits and defects, however, belongs more appropriately to a later stage, when our survey of the system is completed. Meanwhile we proceed to indicate briefly the general lines of the treatment we propose to follow in the present volume.

The order we shall pursue will be that which the subject itself naturally presents. It does not lie within the scope of our design to enter into biographical or personal details, but the connection of Ritschl's theology with the history of his mental development is so intimate that it is necessary that some account should be given of at least the chief stages in his career. For this ample materials are provided in the recent biography by his son,* and interesting glimpses are occasionally furnished by Ritschl himself in his works. The remainder of the present chapter will accordingly be occupied with such a survey, and with a glance at the *personnel* of Ritschl's "School." Thereafter, in a second chapter, we shall seek to trace the historical genesis of the new theology by showing its relation to previous systems, especially those of Kant, Schleiermacher, and Lotze. A third chapter will treat of what may be called the presuppositions of the system—its theory of know-

* *Albrecht Ritschl's Leben*, by Otto Ritschl (2 vols.). With this may be compared Nippold's *Einzelschule*, which reviews the facts from a less favourable standpoint.

ledge and theory of religion; and a fourth of questions usually embraced under Prolegomena—the idea of Revelation, the place of Scripture, miracle, etc. The way will then be open for an exposition of the special Christian doctrines as these lie before us in the connection of the Ritschlian system. This will occupy the fifth and sixth chapters, while the later development of this theology in the circles of Ritschl's disciples will form the subject of a seventh. We shall then be prepared, in a concluding chapter, to sum up upon the system as a whole, and to institute a comparison in cardinal points between Ritschlianism and the ordinary Evangelical Faith. In the course of our exposition we shall endeavour, by references and extracts, to furnish the reader with abundant materials for forming a judgment on the system for himself.

In accordance with the plan now sketched, we begin with a brief account of Ritschl himself. It was remarked above that, in the course of his development, Ritschl passed through nearly all the important phases of thought in his generation.* His mind, we shall discover, was of that receptive cast which took on a deep impression from every fresh influence to which it was subjected: at the same time the energy and independence of his personality were such as to prevent these from ever exercising more than a temporary influence over him, and to secure that the outcome of his thinking should always be in

* In this he strikingly resembled Schleiermacher, who might likewise be described as an epitome and reflection of the tendencies of his age.

harmony with his individual bent. The range of his acquisitions did not suppress his individuality, but only gave occasion for its more conspicuous display. This manysidedness of his training helps largely to explain how he was able to touch his age at so many points.

Albrecht Ritschl was born at Breslau on March 21st, 1822, and died as Professor of Theology at Göttingen on March 28th, 1889. His father, who soon after his son's birth was made Bishop and General Superintendent of the Evangelical Church in Pomerania, was a man of estimable character, and strict sense of duty. His mother was a lady of a lively, energetic nature, quick and sharp in judgment and word *—qualities which Albrecht inherited. From her also he inherited his love of music. Even as a boy, his bent was towards theology—"not merely," as he says himself, "from the child's natural desire to be what his father was, but from a speculative impulse to comprehend the highest truth." † This early-formed purpose in Ritschl's mind, and the speculative motive which led to it ("Drang" is his own stronger word), are deserving of careful note as illustrating, what we shall frequently have to observe, the organic character of his mental development. In 1839 he went to Bonn, studying there, among other professors, under Nitzsch, from whom he received at first a considerable impression. But it was Ritschl's fate never to be long satisfied with his teachers, and by 1841 we find him declaring Nitzsch "exhausted," ‡ and removing

* "Scharf und schnell."—*Leben*, i., p. 18.
† P. 18.
‡ P. 51.

to Halle, where Tholuck and Julius Müller were at the height of their fame. From Tholuck especially he received great kindness, but it was not long before his interest in these teachers cooled also. Both, as systematic theologians, he pronounced "confused" * —an indication of his own systematic bent—and Tholuck's handling of morals, he thought, "lacked foundation." † His own mind at this time was passing through a severe crisis—the result of the ferment between the old and new elements in his education—and we even find him, under pressure of this experience, disposed for a time to give in his allegiance to the ultra-conservative Hengstenberg! But new influences speedily wrought a change in his purposes. The Hegelian philosophy, powerfully represented by such teachers as Hinrichs, Schaller, and Erdmann, was still in the ascendant at Halle, and, with its tone of assurance, its imposing dialectics, and its universal sweep, which left nothing outside the grasp of the "Idea," could not but possess a fascination for a speculatively-disposed mind like Ritschl's. Even earlier we find traces of the attraction which this philosophy had for him. His first purchase at Bonn had been a copy of Hegel's *Logic*,‡ and at the same University he began privately the study of the great idealist's lectures on *The History of Philosophy*. Now the influence of Erdmann at Halle, and association with a group of youthful Hegelian enthusiasts, confirmed the spell, and he passed definitely over to the Hegelian standpoint.

* *Leben*, i., p. 50. † P. 53. ‡ P. 26.

It is difficult, in the light of later events, to figure Ritschl to one's mind as a convinced Hegelian, and his biographer is probably right in the opinion that he never surrendered himself absolutely to the philosophy of the Idea. "Even when living," he remarks, "in the Hegelian world of notions, it was still only the form of his thought; his innermost convictions were not drawn into its service; the ethical kernel of his way of contemplating the world was never sacrificed to intellectualism."* This also seems to have been Ritschl's own view, when, with a kind of amused self-pity, he looked back in after years on this intoxication of his youth. "The Absolute!" he says in one place,† "how finely that sounds! I remember dimly the impression which that word made on me in my youth, when the Hegelian terminology threatened to draw me into its vortex. It is a long time since then!" Ritschl regarded his later break with the philosophy of Hegel as complete; but we may see reason to question whether its effects on certain of his habits of thought were not more lasting than he supposed. Its immediate result was his attachment to the school of Baur, whose acquaintance, after six months spent under Rothe at Heidelberg, he first made at Tübingen in 1845, but with whose *History of the Doctrine of Reconciliation* he had been familiar since his student days at Bonn.‡ The "Tübingen School," as it is called, was then at the summit of its

* P. 49.

† *Theol. und Met.*, p. 18.

‡ *Leben*, i., pp. 58, 59. His later criticism of this work in *R. und V.*, I., chap. i., is very severe.

influence,* and Ritschl was entirely captivated by it. He entered keenly into its critical studies—wrote, for example, on the relation of Luke's Gospel to that of Marcion (1841), and on the Synoptical problem (1851); but the chief fruit of his connection with it was his important—in some respects epoch-making—book on *The Origin of the Old Catholic Church* (1850). The old law of repulsion following attraction here also, however, soon asserted itself. Ritschl's mind, always independent in its actings, was already, when he wrote this book, veering away from Baur's positions; growing estrangement followed, culminating in 1856 with open rupture; finally, in a second and completely recast edition of his work in 1857, his relations with the Tübingen School were formally severed. This work on the Old Catholic Church is one of the best Ritschl ever wrote, and in its revised form, allowance being made for advance of knowledge on points of detail, retains its interest and value almost unimpaired till the present hour. It lays down the lines, indeed, for the study of the earliest age of Christianity which the best scholarship has followed since.† Only its main thesis can be indicated here. Rejecting the Tübingen hypothesis of a conflict between Paul and the original Apostles as the key to

* Baur's *Paulus* was published in 1845. With Baur were associated in this tendency Zeller, Schwegler, Köstlin, etc.

† Harnack says regarding it that its principles "have found acceptance, if not with all, yet with the majority of independent critics" (*Cont. Review*, August 1886, p. 234). Nippold misrepresents the biography on this point by quoting a sentence which relates to the first edition, as if it applied to the second.—*Einzelschule*, i., p. 247 (cf. *Leben*, i., pp. 292-3).

the history of the early Church, it shows that Gentile Christianity was not, as Baur supposed, a product of Pauline influences exclusively, but owed its character rather to a *blunting* of Pauline ideas, arising from the incapacity of the Gentile mind to enter into the Old Testament presuppositions of the latter, and into the peculiar experiences of the Apostle which gave birth to them. This failure to apprehend the thoughts of the Pauline Gospel, with its counterpart in the entrance of the conception of Christianity as "a new law," was the fact which lay at the basis of the complex of hierarchical and sacerdotal institutions known as the Old Catholic Church, and, in union with the idea of the Logos, affords the key also to the form assumed by the Old Catholic theology. Ritschl does not as yet lay the stress he afterwards came to do on the Hellenic factor in the shaping of early theology.

The rupture with Baur may be regarded as marking the middle point in Ritschl's career. From 1846 he had been teaching as "Privat-docent" at Bonn; in 1852 he had been appointed Extraordinary Professor; now, in 1859, he became Ordinary Professor. From this period he strikes out with conscious aim, and in a thoroughly independent spirit, in the elaboration of his own theology. Hitherto his lectures had been chiefly devoted to New Testament Exegesis and Theology and to the History of Doctrine; now he definitely entered the Dogmatic field, never again to quit it. The tentative steps by which his final conclusions were reached are well mirrored in the successive sketches of a dogmatic system preserved by

his biographer,* to the details of which frequent references will be made in the subsequent pages of this volume. The important point to observe in this connection is how from the beginning Ritschl's theological interest centred in the Pauline doctrines of Justification and Reconciliation. It is difficult at first sight to see why this should have been so, for while the doctrine of justification (as he understands it) has undoubtedly a place of great moment in his completed system, it is there already overshadowed by ideas of wider import, and in the theology of his followers disappears as a leading doctrine behind that of the Kingdom of God. Something may be due to the fact that in all the schools of the period when Ritschl began his studies,—the Kantian, that of Schleiermacher, the Hegelian,—great stress was laid on the Christian doctrine of reconciliation;† but, however this may be, there is no doubt that Ritschl's thought early nucleated itself in this important doctrine, and that he made it the centre of all his later studies.‡ Already at Bonn we find him deeply

* The first was in 1853, the second in 1856, the third in 1861, and the fourth in 1866. Cf. *Leben*, i., pp. 226, 278, 384 ff.; ii., p. 21 ff. Many characteristic notes of the later system already appear in these sketches.

† The Kantian theologians, and specially Tieftrunk, earnestly occupied themselves with this problem; Schleiermacher placed the essence of Christianity in the consciousness of redemption by Jesus Christ; Hegelianism also had its third and highest moment in the phase of reconciliation. Cf. the relevant sections in *R. und V.*, i. (E. T., pp. 387, 404, 418, etc.).

‡ In the Preface to his chief work (vol. i., 1st edit., 1870), he practically subsumes the whole of his life-work under this

engaged in the study of its historical development,* and throughout his whole course he kept it in view as the goal of his theological investigations. "It grew," we are told, "to be for him a chief problem of his whole work—whether, namely, together with the common basis of ideas in the New Testament, this special doctrine of Paul could be vindicated as a universally valid expression for the general Christian view; for on the solution of this question depended the other, whether the Reformation theology, which goes back on the Pauline doctrine of justification, could be upheld in its integrity."† Both questions Ritschl answered in the affirmative, and on this account held himself justified in directly connecting his theology with that of the Reformation.‡

particular study. So on p. 1 he designates the doctrine of justification "the real centre of the theological system."

* *Leben*, i., p. 55.

† ii., pp. 172–3.

‡ Ritschl is more "Pauline" than many of his followers. Against those who advocate return to the "historical Christ," and speak slightingly of the Apostolic doctrine, he affirms strongly that we must start with the latter as the expression of the primitive consciousness of the Church. "Theological terminology," he says, "leans directly on the Apostolic series of ideas," and "it would be a false purism if one were to prefer the less extended intimations of Jesus on this subject to the forms of the Apostolic representations. We are further justified in not levelling down the terms of the Pauline formation of thoughts, which is the most detailed of all, but in maintaining them intact in theological usage" (*R. und V.*, iii., p. 3). Whether Ritschl's doctrine is really the Pauline one, or has any genuine affinity to that of the Reformers, is of course a different matter, which will afterwards have to be investigated.

The new direction taken by Ritschl's studies after his break with Baur was immediately apparent in his choosing of the subject *De Ira Dei* for his inaugural address in 1859, and in the articles on Justification and the Work of Christ he now began to contribute to the theological magazines. In other directions also his horizon became sensibly widened. It will have been observed that while mention has been made of the effect produced on Ritschl by Nitzsch, Hegel, Baur, and others, nothing has as yet been said of two great influences that had much to do with the later shaping of his thought—those, viz., of Schleiermacher and Kant. The reason is that up to the point we have reached few traces of one or the other are discernible. Not, of course, that Ritschl was formally unacquainted with the works of either of these great teachers. "In my youth," he tells us, "it was a task imposed on every student of theology to work through Schleiermacher's *Glaubenslehre*," but, he adds, "this undertaking yielded no result for my culture, for I had then no guidance in the study of the book." * Even up to the time of his residence in Halle, he does not seem to have carried out his purpose of making a study of this work. † In 1842 we find him trying to come to an understanding with Schleiermacher's doctrine of the Church ‡; in 1853 we can trace a

* On *Schleiermacher's Reden*, p. 19. "After my experience," he says, "I should be very chary of inviting any young man to undertake the journey, perilous with rocks, through the *Glaubenslehre* or *Reden*, unless I myself held the helm."

† *Leben*, i., p. 46.

‡ Pp. 66-7.

manifest influence of Schleiermacher on his studies in Dogmatics*; and in 1859 the preparation of a course on Ethics led him to a careful examination of Schleiermacher's ethical positions.† It was not, however, till ten years later (1869-70), after his removal to Göttingen, that the real grappling with Schleiermacher came in the preparation of the first (Historical) volume of his own great work; and then we find at one moment his tone carping and depreciatory, and his feelings towards his author amounting almost to disgust;‡ at another, he declares himself reproducing from Schleiermacher "a series of thoughts . . . in which I recognise the key for my whole theology."§ The *Reden* ("Addresses on Religion") did not receive his special attention till 1874, when he made a private study of them with some of his students.‖ In his review of these he somewhat compensates for his previous ill-humour by the high place he assigns to Schleiermacher in the theological thought of the century, while confessing

* Pp. 244-5.

† Pp. 346 *ff.*

‡ ii., pp. 82-3. In letters to Diestel (October 1869 and January 1870) he doubts whether Schleiermacher represents any unconditional advance on previous theology, and specially on Kant, and attributes the pitiable state of existing theology to the superstitious regard for Schleiermacher fostered by those who ought to know better. So much in the *Glaubenslehre* disgusts him (*anwidert*) that only antipathy (*Antipathie*) holds him to his task. He thinks he has done a good work in reducing Schleiermacher to his proper level.

§ P. 68, to Steitz (December 1869).

‖ P. 244.

that he is still alternately captivated and repelled by his procedure.*

To the same period succeeding the break with Baur we must attribute the beginning of the remarkable ascendency ultimately obtained over the thoughts of Ritschl by Kant. Up to 1853, as we learn from the biography, no trace of such influence is perceptible; but already in 1859, in the course of ethics alluded to above, Ritschl had arrived at the conviction that "for the first time Kant has laid the foundation of a philosophy of morals which is adequate to Christianity." † It was, however, as in the case of Schleiermacher, in connection with the protracted historical studies preparatory to his work on Justification, that the decisive impression was made. ‡ Ritschl, indeed, was never a Kantian in the sense of accepting Kant's positions without discrimination or criticism, or a feeling of the need of supplementing them by his own theories of religion and of Christianity; but his mind was now fully awakened to the depth, range, and importance for his subject of the

* On *Schleiermacher's Reden*, p. 19. He is now of opinion that the prevailing theological incapacity stands in the closest connection with the undervaluing of Schleiermacher's theology, as if men had got beyond it! He does not, however, regard Schleiermacher as suitable for theological novices. For these, "besides the Reformation works of Luther, only the study of Calvin's *Institutes* is to be recommended. But if it is desired to complete this stimulus on the material side by methodical guidance in theological thinking, we can only go to school with Schleiermacher and Thomas Aquinas" (p. 20).

† *Leben*, i., p. 346.

‡ ii., p. 81.

Critical Philosophy, and it does him no injustice to say that his thought from this time moved on distinctively Kantian lines. Kant's philosophy, in short, now furnished the framework within which his own theology was set. It is, as he expresses it, the task of theology to prove "the Christian thought of reconciliation by the thought of the moral Kingdom of God, in which Kant, in a purely philosophic way, recognises the final end of the world."* The first edition of the third (Dogmatic) volume of his work (1874), from which the above is quoted, shows this influence of Kant at its maximum; thereafter new forces enter—notably the influence of Lotze.

Ritschl's friendship with Lotze had commenced with his removal to Göttingen in 1864, and Lotze's influence is already well marked in certain directions, even in the first edition of his work.† The Kantian period had, however, to be gone through before he was fully prepared to profit by the new association. Ritschl's thought was always in flux—ever growing, improving upon itself, perfecting itself, as he would say. He "had learned infinitely much in the carrying through of the dogmatic work," he declared, "and was still learning."‡ Accordingly, on the appearance of the second edition of his third volume, in 1883, and afterwards of the third edition in 1888, it was found that his views had undergone many advances and

* *R. und V.*, p. 14 (1st edit.).

† See discussions and references in pp. 171, 199, 261, etc., on the origin of the idea of the world-whole, the personality of God, the idea of eternity, etc.; and cf. *Leben*, ii., p. 20.

‡ *Leben*, ii., p. 150.

changes, some of them noteworthy enough. A passage in the biography deserves notice in this connection. Writing to his son on the revision of the third volume, in 1888, he avows that he finds no satisfaction or strengthening in the work as it lies before him. "Not every day," he says, "can I bring my mind to go on with it. And the reason of this disinclination I find in the fact that the matter confronts me as something strange. I am really surprised at much that I wrote twenty years ago, so little does my memory retain its hold of the parts of the system then constructed."* The principal changes on the first edition were connected with the increased importance he had come to attach to a theory of knowledge in the construction of a theology; the modifications in his own theory under the influence of Lotze; his new working out of the distinctions of religious and theoretic knowledge; his definition of the former as consisting in "judgments of value," etc. The most important of these changes were preluded in his small work on *Theology and Metaphysics* in 1881, in which, and in the 1883 edition of his chief work, he formally avowed himself a Lotzean in his theory of knowledge.† This last change, as we shall see, was more in appearance than reality, for his theory has still more affinity to Kant's than to Lotze's; but Lotze's influence on his ideas was undoubtedly considerable, and may be held to mark the final stage in his development—so far as finality was ever reached. Ritschl's later labours in his elaborate *History of Pietism* (3 vols.,

* P. 510

† *Theol. und Met.*, pp. 32 ff.; cf. *R. und V.*, iii., p. 20.

1880–86)—the work of "a dogmatician in the garb of a historian," as Loofs phrases it*—only indirectly interests us here.

The later years of Ritschl's residence at Göttingen mark the culmination of his influence as a teacher. Previously, the attendance at his classes had not been encouraging, but now that the publication of his large work had established his reputation as an able and independent thinker, he speedily gathered round himself a group of attached disciples, eager and qualified to imbibe the new wisdom. His biographer testifies, in harmony with what has been said, that it was specially his systematic gift which gained for him his hold over them.† Now, accordingly, we begin to see forming itself what with propriety may be called a "school" of Ritschl, though the sense in which this term may be employed is still a good deal in debate. It is a singular circumstance that, notwithstanding the stress laid by Ritschl on the organic character of his theology, no one of his disciples has accepted his system in its entirety—most, indeed, have gone off on lines of their own, and seem anxious, rather than otherwise, to assert their relative independence.‡ Part of the explanation, no doubt, is,

* Quoted in Nippold, i., p. 254.

† "It was not," he says, "Ritschl's labours in Biblical theology by which he exercised an influence on a wider circle. Rather were his scholars won for his view of Christianity quite preponderatingly by his systematic theology."—*Leben*, ii., p. 260; cf., p. 184. Ritschl himself says: "Theological schools are ever formed through principles of systematic theology."—*R. und V.*, i., p. 521 (E. T., p. 493).

‡ Kaftan, *e.g.*, says it is not quite correct to speak of him as

that discipleship to Ritschl, from the nature of the case, was always a thing of very varying degrees. There were those who had received in his class-room their first and strongest theological impulses, but a still larger number, probably, were brought into relation with him only through his books, or in personal friendship, and imbibed rather the spirit and central thoughts of his teaching, than any determinate system. Some of the best known representatives of the "school"—Kaftan and Herrmann, for example—were not pupils of Ritschl at all. Others, again, who took his lectures, carried into their relations with him impulses already derived from previous teachers—*e.g.* Kattenbusch;* while

a follower of Ritschl and representative of the Ritschlian theology, though he has learned much from Ritschl.—*Das Wesen*, Preface. Herrmann speaks of those who are "called" disciples of Ritschl, and says, "A Ritschlian school, as it exists in the warlike minds of its opponents, does not exist, so far as I know. Of the theologians whom it is customary to regard as specially belonging to that school, there is none who is ready to uphold Ritschl's theology at all points. But we have learned more from him than from any other theologian since Schleiermacher."—*Verkehr*, p. 3 (2nd Edit.). Kattenbusch thinks that injustice is done to Schultz in reckoning him without further ado as a "Ritschlian," and says: "Ritschl's theological *principle* is infinitely richer than Ritschl's *system*."—*Von S. zu R.*, pp. 70, 78. This, however, we may point out, was far from Ritschl's estimate of his own work, and reduces his influence to what he himself speaks of so depreciatingly in the case of Schleiermacher, when he denies him the credit of having founded a "school," and allows only—"Of the more systematic theologians of recent times, there is no one who is not indebted to him for essential help."—*R. und V.*, i., p. 465 (E. T., p. 440).

* See his *Von S. zu R.*, p. 72.

some, as Lemme, Bertrand, and Nippold, who at one time were reckoned as disciples, afterwards withdrew, and became critics of the system. Bender, of Bonn, diverged into a subjectivism so pronounced as to lead the party generally to repudiate him. With all the differences that exist, however, there is, as we hope to show, sufficient community of ideas and aims in this circle of theologians to entitle us to speak of them as constituting a "school." *

Of the theologians who may be thus classed it would be hopeless to attempt a complete list; their standpoints vary so much, while many, as just seen, would not accept the designation "Ritschlian" without qualification. Among prominent representatives of older standing are Herrmann, in Marburg; Kaftan and Harnack, in Berlin; Schultz and Schürer in Göttingen; Wendt, in Jena; Lobstein, in Strassburg; Thikötter, pastor in Bremen; Kattenbusch and Stade, in Giessen; Bornemann, in Magdeburg; Loofs, Kähler, and Reischle, in Halle; Häring and Gottschick, in Tübingen; and of the younger men, Baldensperger, in Giessen; J. Weiss (Ritschl's son-in-law), in Marburg; Troeltsch, in Heidelberg; Sell, in Bonn; Ziegler, pastor in Aalen, etc.† Such a list takes no

* Kaftan says in *Zeitschrift*, 1896, p. 378: "The Ritschlian school, as a definite unity, which represents the same theology, exists only in the phantasy of its opponents. The differences among us are very great." But he adds: "Nevertheless, in some essential points we all agree."—Cf. Pfleiderer, *Die Ritsch. Theol.*, p. 77.

† Notices of some of the above may be seen in the *Leben*, ii., pp. 267, 297-8, 363, etc. We may perhaps discount the charges brought by Nippold (ii., pp. 82, ff.) and others against Ritschl

account of the various departments with which these scholars occupy themselves, as Harnack and Loofs with Church History and History of Doctrine; Schultz with Old Testament Theology, Wendt with New Testament Theology, etc. The literary organs of the party are the *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, a review conducted by Harnack and Schürer;* the *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, edited by Gottschick, with help from others of the party; and an ably-conducted semi-popular weekly, *Die christliche Welt*, edited by Rade, pastor in Frankfort. Powerful influences have been received from Ritschl in France and Switzerland, through such teachers as Sabatier, of Paris, and Astié, of Lausanne; in America the cause is represented by Prof. McGiffert, of Union Seminary, New York, etc.†

of having used unworthy means to "capture" the theological faculties for his disciples, though his zeal in the promotion of their candidatures is undeniable. Cf. *Leben*, ii., pp. 303, 331, etc.

* Now, for some years, by Schürer alone.

† Some interesting reminiscences of Ritschl are given by Bertrand in his *Nouvelle Conception de la Rédemption*. "He told me one day," he says, "that three Frenchmen, St. Anselm, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Calvin, deserved, in his view, to be reckoned in the number of the greatest religious thinkers of all ages; and we have ourselves seen him repeatedly in his study take delight in reading a homily of St. Bernard. 'What a man that was!' he said with warmth, in speaking of the famous adversary of Abelard. Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* was his favourite book. 'There,' he said to us in a conversation we had with him, 'there is the masterpiece of Protestant theology'" (pp. 9, 10). This last remark agrees with words of Ritschl already cited.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL GENESIS OF THE RITSCHLIAN THEOLOGY—THE "METHOD."

Relation of the Ritschlian Theology to the Past—The "Speculative" Tendency in Ritschl—Dependence on Kant—Kant's Theoretic Agnosticism—His Practical Faith—The "Moral Proof"—The "Kingdom of God"—Doctrine of Freedom in its bearings on Guilt and Punishment—Modifications in Lotze—Being known only in Relations—Supremacy of the Good—"Forms" and "Values"—Religious Knowledge—Indebtedness of Ritschl to Schleiermacher—Religious Philosophy—Teleological View of Christianity—Reference to Redemption—Religion and Fellowship—Person and Work of Christ—De Wette, etc. The Ritschlian "Method"—Its Ambiguity—Its Real Nature—Ritschl's Agreement with Schleiermacher—Christian Facts studied as "Mirrored" on the subject—The Claim to derive Theology from Historical Revelation—"Scientific" Method in Theology.

THE preceding chapter will have made it evident that the Ritschlian theology is not without large indebtedness to the earlier theology and philosophy of the century. This, of course, is no reproach to it; is rather, in some respects, a merit; though the adherents of the school have not always been as forward as they might to acknowledge the magnitude of the debt. What may fairly be claimed for Ritschl

is that the thoughts he appropriated from others he passed thoroughly through the alembic of his own mind; carried them out with greater logical consistency than his predecessors; and, above all, wrought them into a new and original combination through union with ideas which *were* his own contribution—his theory of religion, for example, and the distinction he makes between the spheres of religion and ethics, and their respective ends. On the other hand, it cannot justly be denied that his theory of knowledge, his doctrine of God and His Kingdom, much of his Christology, his doctrine of the Church, with many other elements of his system, have their roots in previous speculation, or belong to the common heritage of the theological thought of the century. We shall seek in the present chapter to exhibit this genetic connection of the Ritschlian theology with the past, and shall conclude with a brief discussion of the peculiarities of the Ritschlian "Method."

To the interesting question—Did Ritschl's Hegelian stage leave any trace of itself in his finished theology? the correct answer would probably be—in a strict sense, "No"; in a wider respect, "Yes." Apart from the fact that but for Baur's investigations into early Christianity Ritschl's book on the Old Catholic Church could never have been written, there are not lacking evidences that some of the effects of his Hegelian training remained with him to the end. The speculative affinities which originally drew him to the school of Hegel were not destroyed, but strengthened, by the bracing they received in that

stimulating atmosphere, and are, we think, still to be detected under the widely altered forms of his later thought. What distinguishes Hegel is the largeness and boldness of his conceptions, and the daring use he makes of the deductive method. Ritschl also is dominated in an extraordinary degree by the idea of a "whole" in things, and frequently amazes us by the freedom and boldness of his deductions, and the plunges he takes into what, to the ordinary eye, looks very like "metaphysics." We might refer in illustration to his transcendent deduction of the Kingdom of God, and of the world of nature as a means to this, from the idea of the Divine love;* and to the high, speculative type of thinking displayed in his discussions on the Divine Personality,† the relations of eternity to time, etc.‡ It was only in his latest stage that he abandoned the attempt at a "theoretic" proof of God's existence, ontological in character, the germ of which goes back to his Hegelian days (1853).§

In tracing the particular obligations of the Ritschlian system, we naturally turn our attention

* *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 260–70. The idea of love first makes it possible "to derive the world from God," pp. 262, 265. See below, p. 116.

† P. 224. See the passage quoted below, p. 113.

‡ Pp. 223, 282–88. Assonances with Hegel here are marked. See below, p. 110.

§ Cf. *Leben*, i., p. 233, and ii., p. 23. The germ of this "sole scientific proof" lies in the necessity of assuming a common ground of thinking and being. It reappears in the Dogmatic Sketch of 1866 ; has a place in a modified form in the first edition of Ritschl's chief work (iii., p. 192), and is retained partly even in the third edition (p. 213).

first to Kant. If Ritschl came to the study of the Kantian philosophy with many of his theological convictions already well matured, he at least found in that philosophy an instrument which had a decisive effect upon their later shaping. Kant's aim, it is well known, was to restrict reason within its proper bounds by carefully marking off the bounds of possible knowledge. The conclusion reached by a searching examination of the faculties involved is that our knowledge is confined wholly to the phenomenal. We cannot know things "in themselves," but only as they appear to us under the forms of our sense and understanding. An idea of God, springing from the necessities of reason, we indeed have, but it is only regulative, and cannot claim theoretic value.* We have no means of proving that a Being corresponding to it exists. God is therefore theoretically incognoscible. Kant on this side is the father of modern Agnosticism. But there is another side to his speculation, in which lies the true motive of his whole philosophy. If Kant sets strict bounds to the theoretic reason, it is only that he may the more exalt that certainty of God, and of a moral purpose in the world, which he thinks we can derive from the practical reason. From this new standpoint everything is given back which we thought we had

* This part of Kant's system Ritschl does not take over. For him the idea of God is a purely "religious" notion, and arises in a totally different way—viz., as a "postulate" to secure the independence of our personality over against nature, etc. (cf. *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 197, 295; and below on theory of religion).

parted with—God, freedom, immortality. The ends of absolute worth which we discover in ourselves become the key to unlock the riddle of the universe without, and compel us to postulate God as the bond of union between the natural and moral worlds, and to endow Him with all the attributes implied in moral government. We thus arrive at the conception of the world as a teleological system, divine in origin, and having for its end the realisation of a universal commonwealth of virtue, or "Kingdom of God" in humanity. Only, as Kant is careful to remind us, this proof of God's existence is not "theoretic," but solely "moral"; it rests, not on demonstration, but on a "postulate" of moral consciousness; and it gives us no knowledge of God such as we have of objects of experience. The conceptions we work with in experience do not attain to such a height. We can but represent the Divine to ourselves by human and imperfect symbols.*

Meagre as is this sketch of Kant's positions, it suffices to show how largely his thoughts have been appropriated by Ritschl and the other theologians of the "Neo-Kantian" School. As a primary service, Kant furnished Ritschl with a theory of knowledge precisely suited to the requirements of his system. That our knowledge is only of phenomena; that God is theoretically incognoscible; that our conviction of

* See Kant on above, *K. of P. Reason* (Bohn's trans.), pp. 487 ff.; *Pract. Reason* (Abbott's trans.), pp. 220 ff.; *K. of Judg.* (Bernard's trans.), pp. 362 ff. "We can only think the Supreme Being, we cannot *cognise* Him, and ascribe anything theoretically to Him."—*K. of J.*, p. 389.

His existence rests on a practical, not on a theoretic judgment—these are thoughts which, we shall see, are raised in Ritschlian circles almost to the rank of first principles. The Kantian "moral" proof for the existence of God Ritschl also accepts as the alone valid, even to the extent originally of claiming for it a theoretic character which Kant denied to it;* and with it he adopts the Kantian deduction of the Kingdom of God, or association of men through laws of virtue,† and the idea of a final end of the world thence resulting.‡ To these notions of Kant he attached the highest value, both for their own sakes and for their importance to scientific theology.§ It

* *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 186–92 (1st edit.). He retracts this view in his 3rd edition, thereby involving himself in considerable inconsistency. See below, p. 69. But even in the 3rd edition he claims that "the practical reason also is a branch of theoretic knowledge" (p. 211).

† "Christ's design is the Kingdom of God, regarded, as Kant expresses it, as a fellowship of men regulated by laws of virtue."—*R. und V.*, i., p. 492 (E. T., p. 466).

‡ Vol. i., pp. 424 ff. (E. T., pp. 402 ff.); iii., p. 11 (3rd edit.). Kant's deduction of the idea of the Kingdom of God is twofold, according as he starts from the idea of God and the moral end, as given by practical reason (the view of the *Critiques*); or as he starts from the need of moral fellowship in order to the victory of the good over the evil principle in humanity (the standpoint in his *Religion within the Limits of Mere Reason*).

§ "This teleological interpretation of the system of the world, derived from valuation of fellowship in action according to moral law as the final aim of the world, stands," he says, "in direct analogy with the Christian view of the world." It is "Kant's weightiest thought for theology," through which alone theology can obtain a scientific grounding

is observable, however, that in his later handling, while adhering to the spirit of Kant's moral proof, he gives the argument a turn of his own, by basing it upon the worth of personality, rather than on the unconditional law of duty.

There is, however, another and not less important respect in which Kant is regarded by Ritschl as having laid the foundation of a sound Christian theology—especially of a right appreciation of the Christian doctrines of Justification and Reconciliation.* This is in his doctrine of (transcendental) human freedom, with its important bearings on the ideas of guilt and punishment. "The high importance," he says, "of Kant's contribution to the right understanding of the Christian idea of reconciliation lies less in any positive contribution to the structure of doctrine than in the fact that he established critically—that is, with scientific strictness—those general presuppositions of the idea of reconciliation which lie in the consciousness of moral freedom and moral guilt."† Kant secured, as he thought, the idea of freedom through his peculiar distinction of the phenomenal and noumenal. As part of the world of phenomenal ex-

of its idea of God.—*R. und V.*, iii., pp. 13–15, 191 (1st edit.). Thus also in 3rd edition: "A judgment of the moral destination of men, which attaches itself to Kant's fundamental positions, serves as the ground of knowledge for the validity of the Christian idea of God as solution of the problem of the world" (p. 215).

* Cf. *Leben*, ii., p. 81.

† *R. und V.*, i., p. 408 (E. T., p. 387). He speaks of it as "Kant's leading thought—viz., the specific distinction of the power of will from all power of nature" (E. T., p. 444).

perience, man, like every existence in that world, is cognised as under the laws of natural necessity; but as belonging to the noumenal or real world—that which, theoretically incognoscible by us, lies behind phenomena—he acts according to laws prescribed by reason to itself, and so is possessed of freedom. This transcendental attribute of freedom, discovered to us in the moral consciousness, is the ground on which we impute our acts to ourselves, and adjudge ourselves guilty, and deserving of punishment. This connection of ideas Ritschl appropriates, and sees in them "a canon that cannot be superseded for the right estimation of the fundamental idea of Christianity."* At this stage Ritschl seems much in earnest with the ideas of "guilt" and "punishment," which afterwards he does not a little to weaken. He emphasises the "objective" character of guilt,† and praises Kant for upholding the view, as against the

* "Kant's system," he says, "has this importance, that it secures that a man shall pass upon himself the very same moral judgment as is presupposed in the normal estimate of self by Christianity in its Protestant form. . . . The sharply-marked and continuous consciousness of guilt, without which the whole Christian idea of reconciliation is unintelligible, becomes methodically possible only when we judge ourselves after the idea of transcendental freedom" (E. T., pp. 389, 394). It is doubtful how far Ritschl's later views accord with these. See below, Chap. VI.

† "Moreover, guilt, as an objective thing, hanging over us, can be comprehended only because, and in so far as, the subjective consciousness of guilt can be generated by the idea of freedom . . . the objective place claimed by guilt in the course of the life of the individual, as well as in the union of men to one another, is proved in a way to which the orthodox notion does not attain."—Vol. i., p. 416 (E. T., pp. 394-5).

Illuminist theologians, that the essence of punishment lies in its retributive character—not in its reformatory tendency. "The essence of punishment is requital. From the idea of our practical reason, which sets the transgression of moral law in the light of guilt, it follows also that transgression *deserves* punishment."* Many hints are gleaned likewise from Kant's treatment of the ideas of the Christian religion in his *Religion within the Limits of Mere Reason.* Particularly his "recognition of radical moral evil" in men is spoken of as "making an epoch in opposition to the Illumination." † At the same time the defects of Kant's moralising method of treating Christian doctrines as merely symbols of the necessary truths of practical reason are ably pointed out.

Before we pass to Schleiermacher, whose significance for Ritschlianism lies more in the directly religious sphere, it will be convenient to consider how these

* Vol. i., p. 417 (E. T., p. 396). Kant is quoted—"Though he who punishes may at the same time have the gracious purpose of directing the punishment to this (reformatory) end also, yet the infliction must first be justified by itself as punishment, *i.e.* as pure evil. In every punishment as such there must first be *justice*, and this *constitutes what is essential to the notion.*" Later on Ritschl says—"Herein Kant's opposition to the Illuminist treatment of the idea of punishment holds firm ground; and in itself the thought brought before us is one of indubitable truth."—P. 434 (E. T., p. 411). As above observed, it is difficult to reconcile these positions of the first volume with Ritschl's later dogmatic positions, and specially with his rejection of the idea of "retribution," which he came to regard as a "Hellenic" notion. See Chap. VI.

† Vol. i., p. 426 (E. T., p. 405).

thoughts of Kant were carried out and modified by Lotze, to whose standpoint Ritschl latterly, as we saw, explicitly attached himself. In general, it may be said that Lotze allows more to theoretic thought than Kant, and has an ontology which Kant would repudiate; but he is at one with Kant in the vital point that our empirical knowledge is confined within the bounds of the phenomenal. He asserts "the unavoidable and thorough-going subjectivity of our cognition." * Space and time are with him, as with Kant, only forms of our subjective cognition, and are not applicable to real existence.† Only, unlike Kant, he thinks it possible to reach by inference certain conclusions as to the ultimate nature of things, which, *if* they exist at all (and on this his mind wavers, with a leaning to subjective idealism ‡), must, he holds, be conceived of as soul-like beings, or "monads" of the Leibnitzian type.§ If Ritschl's own word could be taken for it, it is Lotze's theory of cognition which he accepts in preference to Kant's.‖ This, however, as most of his critics point out, and his biographer also

* *Outlines of Met.*, p. 143 (E. T.).

† Pp. 89, 131. "The world of space and time is, therefore, 'phenomenon'; the 'real Being,' which answers to it and produces it within us, is dissimilar to it." Cf. *Microcosmus*, ii., pp. 603, 611 (E. T.). The hyper-subtle discussion of time in the *Metaphysics* leaves this essential point untouched. "Time is without doubt merely a creation of our presentative intellect"—"only a subjective form of representation."—*Met.*, i., pp. 350, 354 (E. T.).

‡ *Outlines*, p. 141.

§ Cf. *Microcosmus*, ii., p. 642 ff. (E. T.).

‖ *R. und V.*, p. 20; *Theol. und Met.*, pp. 19, 32 ff.

admits, is only true within limits, and despite a change of phrase—"We know the thing *in* the phenomena" instead of Kant's assertion of the unknowableness of the "thing in itself"—he is really much nearer to Kant than to Lotze in his epistemological view. † For the "phenomena" *in* which the thing is presumed to be known, are only, as before, subjective appearances, and the "real thing," which is the "cause" of the phenomena—if anything more than a mental figment †—remains in its own nature as unknowable as ever. To say, as Kant does, that the "real thing" is unknowable in itself, and with Ritschl that it is known only in the phenomenon (*i.e.*, its subjective effect) are two expressions for the same thing. On the other hand, when we come to consider this theory of knowledge more particularly, it will be seen that there is one side of Lotze's teaching to which Ritschl is undeniably faithful. When, *e.g.*, Ritschl formally defines the "thing" as "the cause of its marks (qualities) which act upon us, as the end which these serve as means, and as the law of their constant

* Stählin, Pfleiderer, Schoen, Favre, Pfenningsdorf, Traub, etc., all agree in this; see also *Leben*, ii., p. 391. His biographer accounts for the unclearness and contradictoriness of the pamphlet *Theol. und Met.* by saying that it was not grounded on the same thorough study of its subject as most of Ritschl's other works.

† This is suggested by Ritschl's account of the genesis of the idea of the "thing" as a mere "memory-image" deposited as the result of repeated impressions, *i.e.*, as a work of subjective imagination. Here we seem landed in idealism; and in this sense, apparently, Traub, a disciple, interprets Ritschl, with approval of his biographer.—*Zeitschrift*, 1894, p. 102; *Leben*, ii., p. 391. See below, p. 62.

changes," * and, again, hints at a subjective origin of the notion of the "thing"—he is evidently following Lotze's lines. For the latter also tends to resolve "things" into their "relations" to our knowledge and sensibility, seeks their reality in the law of their changes, and gives a subjective explanation of the idea of substance.† Only, in his case, this is completed by an ontological view which Ritschl ignores.

The last and chief word in Lotze's system, however, is not found, any more than in Kant's, in his metaphysics. "The true beginning of metaphysic," he declares, "is not to be sought in this, but in ethics . . . I seek in that which *should* be the ground of that which *is*." ‡ With Kant, accordingly, he is in agreement in placing above knowledge the idea of the Good —supremely the *ethical* Good—and in seeking the ultimate principle of the explanation of the world in a "Highest-Good Personal," which he identifies with "Living Love." From this highest point of view, the world, in the whole compass of its relations, is regarded as originating from, and dependent on, a principle of

* *R. und V.*, iii., p. 20.

† Cf. *Met.*, i., pp. 88–99 (E. T.), and on substance, pp. 100 ff. In general, Lotze reverses the position implied in Kant that the knowledge of the "thing in itself," if we had it, would be a higher knowledge than that which we possess. He prefers to conceive of the things as a *means* to produce in us the representations which we have. The higher knowledge "would consist rather in tracing the meaning, bond, and laws of these phenomena than in pursuing anxiously, beyond the power of thought, the means by which the latter are produced in us."—*Logik*, p. 491 (E. T., p. 431). It is, no doubt, this thought which specially seized on the mind of Ritschl.

‡ *Met.*, ii., p. 319 (E. T.).

Creative Love, and as tending to a blessed end.* Of still greater importance in its bearings on Ritschlianism is Lotze's recognition of a faculty in man of "judging according to worth" as something higher than the "theoretic" faculty, with the corresponding distinction of a "world of forms" and a "world of values"—the former existing for the sake of the latter, though this connection, again, cannot be theoretically proved, but is a faith of the spirit, arising from its confidence in the unconditioned worth of its own ideals.† With this goes, in his Philosophy of Religion, the constant emphasising of what belongs to a "religious," as distinct from "a merely intellectual" view of the world—this and that representation being constantly set aside as not demanded by "the religious need," having no significance to "religious feeling," or of no service to "religious interests," while religion is regarded as having "meanings" and "modes of expression" peculiar to itself.‡ We cannot fail to see in these indications the source of the Ritschlian theory of "judgments of value," as this appears in the third edition of the work on *Justification*.§

We saw in our last chapter that Ritschl's feelings towards Schleiermacher exhibited throughout a singular mixture of attraction and repulsion. The thing

* *Microcosmus*, ii., pp. 722-6 (E. T.); *Out. of Met.*, pp. 151-7 (E. T.); *Out. of Phil. of Rel.*, p. 127 (E. T.).

† *Micr.*, i., pp. 244, 396, 400 (E. T.); *Out. of Met.*, p. 151 (E. T.).

‡ Cf. *Out. of Phil. of Religion*, pp. 43, 46-9, 52, 100, 134, 137, etc. (E. T.).

§ iii., pp. 193 ff.

which chiefly repelled Ritschl in Schleiermacher was the element of "mysticism" in his theology, derived from his Moravian training; that which attracted him was, above all, his teleological view of Christianity, and the place given to the idea of "fellowship" in religion.* He held that Schleiermacher had not followed out consistently these ground-thoughts of his system, and claimed that he himself had given them the necessary extension. Schleiermacher's influence on Ritschl, nevertheless, was by no means a slight one.†

In general, Ritschl declares of Schleiermacher that "he is the *only* one since the Reformation who has employed the scientific method of proof in theology"‡; and further states, "He is, in respect of method, my predecessor; I have learned my method partly from him, and partly from Schneckenburger."§ This dependence on Schleiermacher in respect of method will be considered below; meanwhile we look at obligations directly theological. Ritschl justly finds the vitiating element in Schleiermacher's theology in

* *R. und V.*, i., p. 469 (E. T., p. 443); iii., pp. 9, 12.

† On Ritschl's indebtedness to Schleiermacher, cf. *Leben*, i., pp. 244 ff.; and Kattenbusch, *Von S. zu R.*, pp. 72 ff.; Schoen, *passim*. Kattenbusch says—"Schleiermacher's importance for theology lies first in the fact that he has taught us the art of systematic thinking" (p. 11; cf. p. 71).

‡ Ritschl on *S.'s Reden*, p. 18.

§ *Theol. und Met.*, p. 54. It illustrates the curious vacillation of Ritschl's mind towards Schleiermacher, that we find him saying at another time, "I have never had sympathy with Schleiermacher's theological method" (To Diestel in 1869).—*Leben*, ii., p. 82.

his defective idea of God—a vague Absolute, revealed only in feeling *; nevertheless he recognises the exceptional merits of his general religious philosophy, and derives many suggestions from it.† Schleiermacher specially appeals to him by his view of religion as the sense of "the whole" in things; by his contention that "the representation of the world as a whole has its origin in religion, and its guarantee in the idea of God"; ‡ by his polemic against so-called "natural religion," and his view of religions as definite historical magnitudes, each with a strongly-marked, individual physiognomy, having its origin in a definite historical fact, and sustaining itself through a "fellowship," §—this last idea, in Ritschl's judgment, being one of the most important of Schleiermacher's contributions, "whereby he has given a new aspect, primarily to ethics, and secondarily to theology, and has risen above the field of vision alike of the Wolffian and Kantian schools." ‖ If Schleiermacher places the essence of religion in "feeling," Ritschl, with a kindred leaning to subjectivity, places it in "value-judgments." ¶ He accepts also Schleiermacher's view of "dependence" as the ultimate expression of the religious relation, though he could not admit the

* *R. und V.*, i., pp. 480, 512, 523 (E. T., pp. 445, 485, 495); iii., p. 9.

† See on S.'s *Reden*, pp. 18, 34, etc.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

§ Pp. 4–7, 10.

‖ *R. und V.*, i., p. 469 (E. T., p. 443); cf. iii., p 9; *Leben*, ii., p. 82. This thought of "fellowship" is a cardinal one with Ritschl: cf. iii., pp. 27, 28.

¶ *Theol. und Met.*, p. 54; *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 22, 195–7

"immediate consciousness" of this dependence postulated by Schleiermacher (in which he discerned a "mystical" trace), and sought to derive the idea of dependence in another way.* His statements on this subject, however, are continuously modified in his successive editions in the interest of other ideas.†

When we enter the specifically Christian domain, the obligations of the Ritschlian theology to Schleiermacher are still more apparent. The special services which Ritschl attributes to Schleiermacher here are such as these. For the first time, he thinks, Schleiermacher applies the philosophy of religion "to the defining of Christianity as *a positive historical religion*," ‡ and in relation to the general history of religion grasps it under the teleological idea; § he is again the first to apply to it, as defining its end, the idea of the Kingdom of God; further, he places its essence in the idea

* On S.'s *Reden*, pp. 34–5.

† In the *first* edition the point of view is that "religion is in all its kinds and stages alike a recognition of the dependence of man on God," and "Christianity is the religion which gives this idea the greatest extension."—*R. und V.*, iii., pp. 16, 18. In the *second* edition the term "dependence" has mostly disappeared; but there remains the acknowledgment that "dependence on God is the general form of the religious relation," and that "dogmatics grasps all the conditions of Christianity under the scheme of dependence on God" (iii., pp. 13–14). But in the *third* edition, in the first of these passages, the words are inserted, "according to Schleiermacher"; and in the second passage, instead of the words, "under the scheme of *dependence* on God," we have, "under the scheme of an *activity* of God" (iii., pp. 13–14).

‡ *R. und V.*, p. 476 (E. T., p. 450).

§ Pp. 474, 479 (E. T., pp. 448, 453); iii., pp. 9, 12.

of redemption through Christ, and combines with this "the fruitful truth that this religion, like all religions, and like all activities of the spirit, can be rightly set forth only in that fellowship which, presupposing the redeeming activity of its Founder, exists as the communication and diffusion of that redeeming activity." * He lays stress on Schleiermacher's recognition of "the never-ending value of the Redeemer for the society founded by Him," † and on the fact that "redemption, the Redeemer, and the community that is the subject of redemption, stand in inseparable relation to one another." ‡ Jesus, Schleiermacher shows, stands in a different relation to His religion from that which other founders of religions, such as Moses and Mahomet, sustain to theirs. He is "the founder of a society only in virtue of the fact that the members of that society become conscious through Him of their redemption." § He is the sinless archetype of humanity; and it is mentioned in the biography, as a special debt which Ritschl owed to Schleiermacher, that he was led by him to the employment of the idea of "vocation" for the interpretation of the work of Christ. ‖ Many other thoughts might be pointed out in which Schleiermacher is the precursor of Ritschl—the idea, *e.g.*, of a representation of believers before God by Christ, ¶

* P. 476 (E. T., p. 457); iii., p. 9.
† P. 474 (E. T., p. 449).
‡ P. 477 (E. T., p. 451).
§ P. 474.
‖ *Leben*, i., p. 245.
¶ *R. und V.*, pp. 506-8 (E. T., pp. 480-2).

and that of the propagation of Christ's influence by the preservation of His image in the Church.* Ritschl, on the other hand, charges it on Schleiermacher, as already observed, that he does not consistently carry out the teleological idea contained in his definition of Christianity, and traces this to his treatment being crossed by the "abstract Monotheism" of his idea of God." †

Only to refer briefly to other forces contributing to the formation of the Ritschlian theology, one is tempted to find a strain of influence from the æsthetic-religious theory of De Wette, with its broad distinction between the natural world, ruled by mechanical causation, and the world of spiritual freedom, in which religious emotion clothes itself in the language of poetry and symbol. ‡ The resemblances are certainly striking between De Wette's affirmations on Christ, on Revelation, and on Christianity as the religion of the Kingdom of God, and the views advocated by Ritschl. "Jesus is man in the eyes of reason; He is God from the point of view of the æsthetic ideal." His divinity has the value of "a beautiful æsthetic-religious symbol." § This is a near approach to Ritschl's conception of Christ as possessing for believers the "religious value" of

* P. 493 (E. T, p. 467).

† iii., p. 9.

‡ Cf. O. Ritschl, *Ueber Werthurtheile*, p. 8. De Wette already spoke of "value-judging." A link between De Wette and Ritschl was probably Herbart, who brought religion under the category of "æsthetic judgments."—*Ibid.*, pp. 6, 9.

§ Cf. Schoen, pp 77-8, 82.

God.* Another writer to whom Ritschl attributes special importance in the development of the doctrine of the Kingdom of God is Theremin.† Kattenbusch, further, says, "it is not to be mistaken that Ritschl has learned much from Hofmann," who taught him to conceive of Revelation under the form of historical *works* of God to men, and holds that Rothe, to whom also the "Kingdom of God" was a cardinal notion, was not without influence upon him.‡ We need only refer finally to Diestel, his colleague at Bonn from 1851, to whom Ritschl owns his special obligations for the clarifying of his views on the Old Testament doctrine of the Divine "righteousness"—an attribute which Diestel subordinates throughout to the notion of "grace." §

Some consideration may fitly be given at this point to Ritschl's "Method"—a subject to which references are frequently made in books on the Ritschlian theology, without the reader, it is feared, thereby attaining much "light and leading." The statements regarding it lack sadly in precision and consistency. We have heard Ritschl himself declaring that he learned his method in part from Schleiermacher.‖

* Cf. *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 370, 378.

† *Ibid.*, p. 12.

‡ *Von S. zu Ritschl*, p. 74.

§ *Leben*, i., p. 220. "In details you must not credit me with the thoughts upon the O. T. I owe the best of them to Diestel." Schleiermacher also had already declared that "the displeasure and wrath of God are things which do not exist." —*Der christ. Glaube*, sect. 109, 4.

‖ *Theol. und Met.*, p. 54.

Kattenbusch, on the other hand, makes Ritschl's importance to consist specially in the fact "that more perfectly and happily than any other he has really *broken* with Schleiermacher's method."* This is the more confusing that, as we shall immediately see, it is in the very point in which Kattenbusch declares that Ritschl has broken with Schleiermacher, that the latter avers his adherence to him—viz., in his exhibition of the religious relations "in the frame of the subjective life." † What, then, *is* Ritschl's method? Is it his procedure according to a determinate "theory of knowledge"? ‡ This might seem borne out by his avowal that "each theologian is under necessity or obligation as a scientific man to proceed according to a definite theory of knowledge, of which he must be conscious and the legitimacy of which he must prove." § Is it the resultant complete separation of theology from philosophy, and, generally, from theoretic knowledge? This also might be maintained. Or is it, on the positive side, the acceptance of the principle that "the Revelation-value of Christ is the ground of knowledge for all the problems of theology"? ‖ Does it, that is, consist in deriving everything in theology from the pure source of Revelation in the Person of the historical Christ? This is the view of the

* *Von S. zu Ritschl*, p. 70.

† *Theol. und Met.*, p. 54.

‡ Thus Bertrand, *Une nouvelle Conception*, etc., pp 25 ff. In this sense also we read that in his third edition (of vol iii.) "the questions of method were investigated at length."—*Leben*, ii., p. 410.

§ *Theol. und Met.*, p. 60; cf. *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 16, 18.

‖ *R. und V.*, iii., p. 6.

method taken by Kattenbusch and others;* and, if we include the writings of the New Testament Scriptures as witnesses to Christ's Revelation, it also has support in Ritschl's statement that "the idea of the Christian religion is reached through the orderly reproduction of the series of the thoughts of Christ and His Apostles."† Or does the method consist, finally, as the biographer represents, in laying it down as a necessary condition of the production of the Christian view (*Weltanschauung*) "that the theologian has to reckon himself as a member of the Christian community?"‡ This, again, certainly, is an idea on which Ritschl lays the greatest stress, though whether it is entitled to be exalted to the rank of his "method" is another question. We shall probably best reach Ritschl's mind by not treating any of these ways of stating his method as exclusive. The highest principle of the Ritschlian theology, we might say, is, to take all in one view, the sole Revelation-value of Christ, in contrast with all commingling of Christian faith with philosophy or nature-knowledge, and under the condition that the theologian has his standing within the Christian community as one who shares its faith and experience.§ Yet the biographer is right in regarding this last peculiarity

* *Von S. zu Ritschl*, p. 76: cf. Reischle's article in *Zeitschrift*, 1897, p. 173.

† *R. und V.*, iii., p. 8.

‡ *Leben*, ii., p. 84. On Ritschl's "discovery" of this idea and its bearings in 1868, see his *Letter to Diestel*, ii., p. 48.

§ Pfleiderer has yet another view of the Ritschlian method. "That perplexing swaying and capricious skipping," he says, "between an idealistic and realistic mode of consideration,

of the Ritschlian method as the one which, in some sense, gives its character to the whole. Through it, as we are now to discover, what looks like an objective procedure is translated back in its entirety into the terms of the subjective. This recalls us to the question of the relation of Ritschl's method to that of Schleiermacher and his followers.

Kattenbusch would make the contrast in these two methods to consist in this, that Ritschl starts from the objective Revelation in Christ—"Christ as *Person* is for Ritschl all in all," *—while Schleiermacher and his school start from "the pious consciousness," or something subjective; and at first sight the distinction seems justified. Ritschl does exalt the Person of Christ and His historical work as the sole source of our knowledge of God; and there is as little doubt that Schleiermacher resolves theology into a description of the states of the "pious consciousness"—that consciousness, however, being produced by the action on the soul of the historical Redeemer, and referring everything in the experience of redemption back to

in which quite peculiarly the whole secret of the Ritschlian 'method' consists."—*Die Ritsch. Theologie*, p. 6.

* Pp. 74-7. "The point of Ritschl's system," he says, "is to be recognised in the fact that he does not start from 'the pious consciousness,' but from the Gospel. Dogmatics is not for him a picturing or interpretation of a *factual condition* of piety within the Christian community, but the indication, and to the utmost possible degree the unfolding, of the *norm* of all piety in the Christian Church. . . . If Ritschl makes Revelation, the Gospel, the Holy Scripture as such, the starting-point for dogmatics, nevertheless everything in it is for him invariably comprehended in a unity in the 'historical Person of Christ.'" So Reischle, in article above referred to.

Him. On closer inspection, however, this apparent distinction vanishes, or at least is reduced to a minimum.* For, on the one hand, as Ritschl himself points out, the experiences which Schleiermacher, in terms borrowed from his Moravianism, describes as a real spiritual communion between God and the believer, are, just as with Ritschl, nothing more than "the effects which extend from Christ to the believer in the Church"; † and, on the other hand, Ritschl too, in the outcome, derives his theology, not immediately from the Person of the Redeemer as an *objective* source, but from the *subjective* apprehension and faith of the Church. The theologian, we have been told, is to reckon himself in the community, and to build up his system from that standpoint; and this means more than might at first sight appear. "The material for theology," we are informed, "is not to be sought directly in the sayings of Christ, but rather in the corresponding representations of the original consciousness of the community. The faith of the community that it stands to God in a relation essentially conditioned by forgiveness of sins is the immediate object of theological knowledge.‡ Further on, this is explained and extended.§ Theology, we

* We have here in view specially the later editions of the *R. und V.* and the *Theol. und Met.* In the first edition the objective character of the Revelation is better preserved. We shall see that there is a marked progress in Ritschl to greater subjectivity as his system develops. With this goes hand in hand the development of the doctrine of "value-judgments."

† *Theol. und Met.*, p. 54.

‡ *R. und V.*, iii., p. 3.

§ In third edition.

are taught, has only to do with the effects of the Divine working in us, or with the Divine workings as set forth in these effects. "Outside of the self-activity in which we appropriate the workings of God, and realise them for our salvation, we have no understanding of religious truths."* And in this position Ritschl expressly identifies himself with Schleiermacher. "This method of treatment," he says, "has already been initiated by Schleiermacher."† "Further, Schleiermacher analysed all these relations in the frame of the subjective life; he is therefore in respect of method my predecessor."‡

The contrast drawn between the method of Ritschl and that of Schleiermacher, therefore, cannot be sustained. Both deal with Christian facts, not objectively, but as "mirrored in the subject."§ This is in keeping with the doctrine we shall afterwards

* P. 34. The statement, which in itself might bear a good sense, is to be taken in the light of what accompanies it. Ritschl connects it with his Lotzean theory of knowledge by the remark that, "according to the right theory of knowledge, even the sensuous object is not observed and explained as it is in itself, but only as we represent it."

† *Ibid.*, p. 34.

‡ *Theol. und Met.*, p. 54.

§ *R. und V.*, iii., p. 34. The two standpoints are put somewhat naïvely side by side in the biography, without any attempt being made to reconcile them. "Consequently Ritschl confesses himself a follower of Schleiermacher in his procedure of gaining the understanding of the objective Christian doctrines from their mirroring in the human subject. On the other hand, he separates himself quite as decidedly from Hofmann and Lipsius in their conversion of the subjective experience into the constitutive factor of theology."—*Leben*, ii., p. 191.

have to consider, that religion moves solely in the region of "value-judgments."* It is, indeed, in itself a true and valuable thought, for their emphasising of which all credit is due to Schleiermacher and Ritschl, —though assuredly it is not a new one—that the facts of Christianity can only be rightly understood from the standpoint of faith and experience of redemption. But a dangerous subjectivity is the result when the experience is substituted for the facts, and the latter are allowed to be stated and studied only in terms of the former. And this, it seems to us, is what the Ritschlian method really comes to.

The other aspect of the Ritschlian "method"—its claim, viz., to draw everything from the pure source of Revelation in Christ without admixture of philosophy or nature-knowledge, is also a promise of the system that is not fulfilled. Without anticipating discussions that are to come later, it will be sufficient to take Ritschl's own account of scientific theological method to see the extent to which his philosophical presuppositions and theories are allowed to colour and control his theological treatment.† It is not enough, he holds, that Biblical theology should give us a correct exhibition of the thoughts of Christ and His Apostles in their original sense.‡ This affords no

* *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 93 ff.

† Ritschl's critics are never more successful than in showing he deception in which he entangles himself in his supposed renunciation of metaphysics. Frank compares him to the son in the Gospel who said "Yes" and did "No."—*Theol. A. Ritschl's*, pp. 27, 36.

‡ For following, see especially *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 14–25.

guarantee for the completeness and clearness of these representations, such as can only be furnished by the setting forth of their scientific connection with the Christian view of the world as a whole. It is this Christian view of things (*Weltanschauung*), as a whole, and in the necessary interdependence of its parts, which is, as we formerly saw, in Ritschl's view, the peculiar object of systematic theology. As he expresses it—"Theology solves its problem when it exhibits the Christian total view of the world, and of human life, under the guidance of the Christian thought of God, and according to the destination of man to blessedness in the Kingdom of God, perfectly and clearly, in whole and in particulars, and in the necessity of the reciprocal relation of its members."* This, it is evident, prescribes to theology a task which already takes it far beyond anything it can immediately derive from the thoughts of Christ and His Apostles. The mere summation of exegetical results will not yield it, any more than it can prove it when obtained. It can only be produced through a speculative effort, working on the material submitted to it,† and the test of its validity must be sought not in its internal coherence, but in something beyond itself. The nerve of theological method, therefore, now lies in the means by which this scientific validity of the Christian view of the world is established. In the first edition of his *Justification*, accordingly, Ritschl has much to say of the "rationality" and

* P. 24.

† His biographer recognises this speculative labour in Ritschl's theology.—*Leben*, ii., p. 197.

"the scientific proof" of Christianity,* and finds the possibility of the latter in Kant's thought of the moral Kingdom of God as the final end of the world. An interesting illustration of his position at this stage is furnished by his remarks on Hofmann, who *did* hold the view, which we might have supposed was entirely that of Ritschl, that "no ideas which have originated outside of it (Christianity) can be allowed to have any determining influence upon its unfolding of itself."* This view, however, Ritschl scornfully repudiates. It only shows, he says, that Hofmann knows of nothing except Biblical theology. He blames Hofmann for "rejecting every *scientific* inquiry into a necessary concatenation between Revelation and the necessary idea of God, and the necessary view of the world and human history, because this idea of necessity has arisen outside the fact of Christianity. On the other hand," he goes on, "I am convinced that the science of systematic theology, however much it has materially to be based upon Biblical theology rightly understood, can be developed only from the problem which Hofmann sets aside." And he adds—"His regardlessness of all that is proper in a definition shows right clearly that the theologian has need of ideas which have arisen outside of the fact of Christianity, and which, even though they be only logical, will yet have a determinative influence upon the *theological* presentation of Christianity."† This, then, we may regard as

* Vol. iii., pp. 10–15 (1st Edit.).
† Vol. i., p. 571 (E. T., p. 540).
‡ P. 571.

the pure Ritschlian "method," and though in later editions important changes are introduced—though we hear less of "necessary ideas" of God, etc.—yet the ground-view remains the same, and is even strengthened by the declaration that "the formally correct shaping of theological propositions is dependent on . . . the theory of knowledge which one consciously or unconsciously follows." * We shall see in next chapter that it is no merely "logical" or "regulative" part which the theory of knowledge plays in this system, but one which cuts deeply into its vitals.

* Vol. iii., p. 16 (3rd Edit.).

CHAPTER III

THE RITSCHLIAN THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE AND THEORY OF RELIGION—TWOFOLD END IN RELIGION AND ETHICS

The Ritschlian System—"Theology without Metaphysics"—Qualification of this: Need of a Theory of Knowledge—Religious and Theoretic Knowledge—Ritschl's Phenomenalism—Bearings on his Theology—Doctrines of God, Christ, the *Unio Mystica*, Sin—Nature of Religious Knowledge—"Judgments of Value"—Differences on this Subject—Application to "Godhead" of Christ.

The Ritschlian Theory of Religion—Man and the "World"—Derivation of Idea of God—"Value-Judgment" in this connection—Distinction of Ends in Religion and Morality—Bearings on Theology—Justification and Good Works—Ritschl's Definition of Christianity.

IT is now our duty to endeavour to give an objective presentation of the Ritschlian theology, meaning by this, in the first instance, the theology of Ritschl himself, in the systematic connection of its thoughts, reserving, as far as may be, criticism of the various positions to a subsequent chapter. Criticism it will be impossible absolutely to avoid, in view of the changes of standpoint in the successive editions of Ritschl's work, and the inconsistencies and logical gaps in the system itself. The difficulty felt by the student in grasping the trend of the Ritschlian

system arises largely from the fact that it does not follow the order of the familiar dogmatic categories—Theology, Anthropology, Christology, Soteriology, etc. (these belong to the "scholastic" scheme)—but starts from a basis of its own, and develops its ideas in an original connection. In a *formal* respect, the character of the system is determined by its theory of knowledge and theory of religion. These define the limits within which it works, and furnish it with its controlling ideas. In a *positive* respect, the theology finds—or professes to find—its principle in the historical Person and Revelation of Jesus Christ, from which are deduced the doctrines of God and His Kingdom, of Christ as the Founder of the Kingdom and Redeemer, of sin and redemption, of justification and reconciliation, and of the Christian life. We begin in this chapter with the Theory of Knowledge and Theory of Religion, in which lie, as above hinted, the really governing ideas of the system.

It has already been noticed that a primary aim in the Ritschlian system is to free theology from all association with or dependence on philosophy, or what it calls "metaphysics." The Christian religion, it is contended with emphasis, and surely so far rightly, has its all-sufficient grounds of faith within itself, its own spring of knowledge in the Revelation of Christ, its own connection of ideas, and independent view of the world, growing out of that Revelation. It can only suffer, therefore, it is argued, from any blending of its truths with conceptions "metaphysical" in origin, or from the attempt to give its doctrines a rational form or grounding by the methods

and appliances of speculative thinking.* The bane of theology since the days of the early Apologists—in whose hands, from a natural desire to commend it to minds trained in Greek wisdom, Christianity became a species of "rational theology" †—has been this ill-starred alliance with philosophy, and the remedy for it is the complete separation of Christian doctrine from everything of a metaphysical nature.

"Theology without metaphysics," accordingly, is the first watchword of the school.‡ The idea, indeed, is not a new one. It is found in Schleiermacher, De Wette, and many more; but the Ritschlians claim to give it for the first time a thorough-going application. This general position, however, is subject to one exceedingly important qualification. If this division between theology and philosophy is to be carried out, it can only be on the ground of some

* Pfleiderer finds the "nerve" of the opposition of this school to others "in their unconditional rejection of what they are accustomed—unwarrantably indeed—to designate 'natural religion,' meaning by that what others are wont to name the religious endowment of human nature, the *a priori* ground and germ of religious and moral development, the innate image of God or natural Revelation of God in human nature."—*Die Ritsch. Theol.*, p. 77.

† Cf. *R. und V.*, iii., p. 12 (1st Edit.); on *S.'s Reden*, p. 60.

‡ "Apart from the doctrine of God," Ritschl holds, "Christian dogmatics affords no direct occasion for setting up a metaphysical thought as theological. All the other themes of theology are of so specifically spiritual a nature, that metaphysics only comes into consideration as supplying the formal rules of knowledge."—*Theol. und Met.*, p. 40. The doctrine of God, he goes on to show, is no real exception. We shall immediately see how deeply, in truth, Ritschl's metaphysics cuts into the subject-matter of his theology.

essential distinction eing shown to exist between their respective spheres, either in the nature of the objects, or in the character of the mental activities involved. And the proof of this can only be furnished by an inquiry which is itself metaphysical. To prove that philosophy should have no place in theology, it is necessary to philosophise. The nature of knowledge must be investigated, if only to bring out its essential limits. When brought to the point, therefore, as to the complete exclusion of metaphysics from theology, Ritschl says boldly: "It is an unthinking and incredible contention that I exclude all metaphysics from theology." * Metaphysics is involved in laying down the theory of knowledge by which the theologian is to be guided, and through which his assumptions as to the illegitimacy of the further use of reason in theology are to be justified. This is what Ritschl means when he says that the opposition between him and Luthardt resolves itself at bottom into a difference of their theories of knowledge—not the question of *whether* there is to be metaphysics, but as to *what* metaphysics is to be employed †—and declares, in words formerly quoted, that "each theologian as a man of science is under necessity and obligation to proceed according to a definite theory of knowledge, of which he is conscious, and the legitimacy of which he must prove." ‡ But it is evident, further, that if, as the result of such an inquiry, philosophy is to be excluded from theology, this exclusion can only be vindicated on grounds which cover much more than philosophy. Philosophy

* *Theol. und Met.*, p. 40. † Pp. 32, 41. ‡ P. 40.

is a branch of the mind's theoretic activity, and the only effectual way of demonstrating that philosophy, or "metaphysics," has no rightful place in theology, is to establish that theoretic thought *generally* has no such place, that religious knowledge is of a different kind from theoretic knowledge, and can have no legitimate dealings with it; that, in words employed by Ritschl in his first edition, the two are "opposed activities of spirit." * This, accordingly, is what Ritschl, in his theory of knowledge, attempts to show, and we must now look at the road by which he reaches his conclusion.

The general philosophical basis of his theory of knowledge has already been indicated in speaking of Kant and Lotze. Ritschl, like Kant, shuts the mind up wholly within the world of phenomena. He does not, indeed, formally grant this. He discusses different theories of knowledge, and ultimately professes his attachment to that which he describes as Lotze's.† We do not, he admits, know things "in themselves"—the Kantian *Ding an sich* is dismissed

* *R. und V.*, iii., p. 170 (1st edit.). Even in the third edition, p. 185, he describes religion and theoretic knowledge as "distinct functions, which, even when applied to the same object, do not even partially coincide, but go totally asunder."

† *R. und V.*, iii., p. 20. The view in the first edition, however, is essentially Kantian, and traces of this remain in the later editions. See, *e.g.*, on the *a priori* character of the category of Causality, as "not an abstraction from our experience, but a presupposition of our thinking, which first makes experience possible," etc., pp. 582-3 (3rd edit.). In reality, as remarked in the previous chapter, his theory differs in many important respects from Lotze's. See criticisms by Stählin, Pfleiderer, Bertrand, Favre, etc. His biographer says

as an impossible abstraction—but he contends that we do know them *in* their phenomenal relations. The relations of the thing to us *are*, for purposes of knowledge, the thing. What we denominate "the thing," in distinction from its phenomena, is a product of our phantasy. The persistency and repetition of impressions in space and time—the constancy of the law of their changes—deposit in our minds a "memory-image," which we mentally place *behind* the phenomena, and figure to ourselves as a something subsisting *per se*—the cause of the impressions we experience, the persistent element in their changes: in a word, "the actual thing."* In this process of grouping phenomena into unities, we are guided by the analogy of our thinking soul, "which, in the change of experiences, feels and remembers itself as an abiding unity."† But the whole process is subjective, hypothetical, imaginative, and never really leads beyond phenomena.‡ Ritschl here comes perilously near subjective idealism—to which we saw also that Lotze had a leaning §—and an idealistic view is attributed to him by Traub, ‖ and

that Ritschl follows Lotze's theory of knowledge only so far as Lotze agrees with Kant.—*Leben*, ii., p. 391.

* *Theol. und Met.*, p. 38; *R. und V.*, iii., p. 20. We are reminded of Mill's definition of matter as "the permanent possibility of sensation."

† *T. und M.*, p. 19.

‡ On the above views, see in general *T. und M.*, pp. 32-40; *R. und V.*, pp. 32-40.

§ *Microcosmus*, ii., pp. 640-42 (E. T.); but specially *Outlines of Met.*, p. 141 (E. T.).

‖ *Zeitschrift*, 1894, p. 102.

apparently by his biographer.* We question whether this is his real view; but his language undoubtedly lies open to the charge of much vacillation and inconsistency.†

To Ritschl himself, however its importance may be minimised by others,‡ his theory of knowledge is no mere matter of abstract speculation. Its bearings on his theology are real and vital. It is, indeed, only in the interests of theology, and for the sake of the support it yields him there, that he concerns himself with it at all. The laws laid down for knowledge are the laws of *all* knowledge—religious and other §—and they prescribe *a priori* for theology the bounds which it must respect. The consequences for theology form a curious commentary on the statement that the theory of knowledge has only a "logical" application in doctrine. If the results are only "logical," then logic, as Hegel held, goes to the core of thinking. In the doctrine of God, for example, this theory sweeps aside at once all talk of

* *Leben*, ii., p. 391.

† Thus, in the same breath with his other statements, Ritschl says that in phenomena "something real, viz., the thing, appears to us, or *becomes the cause of our sensation or perceptions.*"—*R. und V.*, p. 20. Here "the thing" is something actual and objective; the "cause" of our impressions; is nearly identical, therefore, with Kant's "thing in itself." In the other passages "the thing" is described as only a mental fiction. It is this wavering between idealism and realism which lays Ritschl open to the criticism of Pfleiderer and others. His defenders (Traub, O. Ritschl, etc.) admit the inconsistency.

‡ Cf. *Leben*, ii., p. 391.

§ *R. und V.*, iii., p. 23.

an absolute "nature" in Deity as the ground of his historical manifestations; or of inherent "attributes" in God; or of such inner distinctions in His essential Being as are implied in the ordinary doctrine of the Trinity. All this is "metaphysical," and has no lawful place in Christian theology.* In Christology, again, this theory disposes of all discussions respecting "natures" in Christ, or the "union" of the two natures, and leaves us with only the historical image preserved in the words and acts of the Gospels. But the chief service of this theory, in Ritschl's view, is the blow it enables him to deal at everything of the nature of "mysticism" in religion. The assumption in mystical theories is that, behind the activities of the soul in thinking, feeling, willing, there is a substantial existence of the soul itself—the seat of the *unio mystica*, the place of the indwelling of Father, Son, and Spirit, the centre of the Divine operations in grace. This view falls when we understand, what the Ritschlian theory of knowledge teaches us, that the soul subsists only in its functions, and that this idea of its existence as an abiding something in the midst of its manifestations is a scholastic

* Thus Frank's use of the term "Absolute" is spoken of as nothing else than an unsuitable mixing of metaphysics with the religion of Revelation."—*T. und M.*, p. 18. He accuses Frank of taking a metaphysical notion of God which has originated outside the sphere of Christian Revelation, and clothing it with Christian predicates. See Frank's reply, *Theol. A. Ritschl's*, pp. 54 ff. Ritschl's polemic against the idea of "the Absolute" is, however, repudiated by writers who agree with him in his general standpoint as Kaftan, Schultz, Scheibe, etc. See p. 108.

fiction.* Another application of this theory is to take the ground from the Church doctrine of original or inherited sin.† It would, however, seem to strike equally at the scientific doctrine of "heredity."

We have dealt thus far with the theory of knowledge in general, but have not yet touched on the crucial point in the Ritschlian doctrine—the broad distinction it goes on to draw between "religious" and "theoretic" knowledge. Such a distinction is implied in Ritschl's system from the first, but the grounds and nature of it are somewhat differently stated in the different editions. In the first edition, the distinction is sought to be grounded in the nature of the object. Religion, through the idea of God, yields us the idea of the world as a whole, while philosophy and science deal with the general laws of knowledge and existence without being able to rise to

* The logical outcome of this view, and of the whole theory of knowledge, if rigorously pressed—though of course Ritschl does not thus press it—would be a phenomenalism as pure as Hume's own. But what then becomes, say, of the notion of "personality"; or of "freedom" and its "transcendental ground," which surely implies an *an sich* being of the soul; or of habits, propensities, etc., recognised by Ritschl, which likewise imply a basis in which they inhere. The Personality of God is an article of faith with Ritschl; but surely we are justified in saying with Pfleiderer that of all things "personality is a being-for-self which apprehends itself as such, and distinguishes itself from others, which is not lost in the manifoldness of its modes of activity and expression, but abides, as a constant unity, with itself and in itself."—*Die Ritschl. Theol.*, p. 8. Even Ritschl can speak of feeling as that function of the spirit "in which the 'I' is originally present for itself."—*R. und V.*, iii., p. 194.

† *T. und M.*, p. 60,

a true unity.* In subsequent editions this point of view is partially surrendered. It is now acknowledged that both religion and philosophy have to do with the same object, viz., the world, and that the latter as well as the former has for its aim the comprehension of the totality of the world under a highest law; that, therefore, "provisionally at least, no distinction of the two kinds of knowledge is to be reached in the object."† The ground of the distinction, accordingly, is now, in harmony with Ritschl's more developed theory of knowledge, transferred to the subject, and is placed in a difference in the mode of knowing. Here we come on the much-canvassed Ritschlian doctrine of the "worth-" or "value-judgments" (*Werthurtheile*),‡ in which the peculiarity of religious knowledge is supposed to lie. The mind, we are taught—and here the influence of Lotze is very manifest—relates itself to the impressions excited in it in a twofold way. Either it directs its attention upon

* *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 170, ff. (1st edit.).

† iii., pp. 193-4 (3rd edit.). It may be said, however, to be Ritschl's contention to the end that a disguised religious impulse is working even in the philosophical strivings after a world-whole. Cf. iii., pp. 210, ff.

‡ On the preparation for this notion in Kant, Schleiermacher, De Wette, Herbart, Lotze, see specially O. Ritschl's *Ueber Werthurtheile*, pp. 1-12; and Scheibe's *Die Bedeutung der Werturteile*, pp. 1-4. For the introduction of the term into theology we are indebted to Herrmann, *Die Religion*, etc., pp. 80 ff.; and Kaftan, *Das Wesen*, who both wrote before Ritschl's second edition. But the essentials of the idea are in Ritschl's first edition, and indeed go back much earlier.—*Leben*, i., p. 396. Ritschl's later views here, as often elsewhere, are but a consequential development of his earlier.

them as objectively given, and seeks to connect them with one another as parts of a system of nature through the causal bond (theoretic knowledge); or it estimates them according to their worth for the subject, viewed as susceptible of pleasure and pain (value-judgments). No form of theoretic knowledge is *absolutely* disinterested; it has always its spring in some form of desire, and is accompanied by feeling. But there are judgments which have no tinge of a theoretic element but express *values only*—such, *e.g.*, as our æsthetic, our moral, and, above all, our religious judgments. These are not merely "accompanying," but "independent" "judgments of value," and as such stand in a different class altogether from "theoretic judgments." Their peculiarity is that they set forth, not the objective nature and relations of things, but exclusively their value *for us*—their fitness to meet and satisfy some want or craving of the feeling self. The characteristic of religious knowledge we are in search of is thus thought to be discovered. "Religious knowledge moves in the sphere of independent judgments of value."* It has nothing to do with things in their objective, scientific relations, or as objects of philosophical speculation, but solely with what helps or hinders the spirit in the attainment of its religious ends. Its modes of representation may be —invariably are—different from those of the theoretic faculty; often there may appear to be conflict, if not contradiction, between them. But the spheres are to be kept sacredly apart, and so long as their distinction is remembered, no collision can ensue. Ritschl, indeed,

* iii., p. 195.

does not mean that the mind is indifferent to the reality of the objects of its religious representations—to the reality, *e.g.*, of God's existence; but this conviction of their reality is not gained in any theoretic way, nor rests in any degree on theoretic grounds, but springs, we must suppose, from the judgment of worth itself;* and its mode of apprehending and representing them is governed in like manner solely by the religious interest. It takes nothing to do with them, that is, in their theoretic relations, but fastens only on their sides of value to itself, and represents them in a way suited to express that value, and in no other.

It was only to be expected that a distinction of this kind, far from unambiguous, and, as reflection showed, assailable at many points, should give rise to much discussion and no little difference of opinion within the limits of the Ritschlian school itself, and we shall see afterwards that it has done so—some, as Herrmann (in works published, however, before Ritschl's second edition), going even beyond Ritschl in the assertion of the mutual exclusiveness of the spheres of religious and theoretic knowledge;†

* In this case, however, they become, as Kaftan, Scheibe, and most of the critics point out, not "judgments of value" only, but "judgments of being" as well. The crucial points in relation to the "judgments of value" are: 1. If a judgment of existence is included, how can they be value-judgments *only*? 2. What is the guarantee for the reality of objects, the conviction of whose existence is based only on value-judgments? 3. What controls the representations we form, if we have no independent knowledge respecting them?

† He goes so far as to maintain that "reality" has a different meaning in the two spheres, and holds it to be

others, as Kaftan, while agreeing with Ritschl in his main contention,* taking exception to his form of putting the distinction, and preferring to speak of religious knowledge as consisting of "theoretic judgments which *rest* on judgments of value." † Ritschl, however, was not to be moved from his own matured view, and continued to adhere to it to the end of his life. The statements in his volumes underwent a corresponding change. Thus, in his earliest edition, as formerly remarked, he rebuked Kant for holding that his moral proof of the existence of God had only a "practical," and not also a "theoretic," character. In later editions this disappears, and in the third we have the affirmation of the exact opposite.‡ This view,

indifferent to the Christian view whether a man be philosophically a materialist or an idealist.—*Die Religion*, etc. p. 111, cf. p. 86; *Die Metaphysik*, etc., p. 17.

* "I have never regarded the difference between Ritschl and myself on this subject as one of principle, or generally of substance. I have never said more than that his mode of expression was liable to be misunderstood."—In *Theol. Lit.-Zeit.*, 1895, No. 7.

† *Das Wesen*, pp. 38 ff. (1st edit.); *Die Wahrheit*, pp. 1–7, etc. Thus also Scheibe. In an article in *Zeitschrift*, 1891, on "Glaube und Dogmatik," Kaftan abandons the expression *Werthurtheile* altogether as liable to misapprehension. Herrmann latterly prefers to speak of "thoughts of faith."

‡ It may suffice to put the two statements together. In the *first* edition we read: "This acceptance of the idea of God is no practical faith, but an act of theoretic knowledge."—iii., p. 192. In the *third* edition: "This acceptance of the idea of God is, as Kant remarks, practical faith, and not an act of theoretic knowledge" (p. 214). The curious thing is that the train of reasoning which leads up to these diametrically opposite conclusions is practically the same in the two cases.

moreover—that religious knowledge consists exclusively in value-judgments—best expresses the real genius of his theology. The clearest example of the theological use of the distinction is its application to the doctrine of the "Godhead" of Christ. The predicate "Godhead" is retained, but only as expressive of the Revelation-worth of Christ—of His religious value. It is a term of value, not of essence, or of dignity of nature.* So the term "miracle" expresses the religious value of a particular occurrence to the individual, but says nothing of its objective relations to nature.† This mode of contemplating and judging is carried through the whole Christian view—is applied, *e.g.*, to sin and redemption, to justification, to providence and prayer—and thus an entire severance is thought to be effected between religion and philosophy.‡

These views of Ritschl on the distinction of "religious" and "theoretic" knowledge receive further illustration when, leaving the theory of knowledge, we turn to a not less fundamental and important part of the Ritschlian system—its Theory of Religion. It would be interesting to trace the steps by which Ritschl arrived at his final conclusions on this sub-

* See below, Chap. V., and cf. *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 367-8.

† *Unterricht*, pp. 14–15 ; cf. *R. und V.*, iii., p. 430 ; *Leben*, i., p. 396 ; and see next chapter. Ritschl, apparently, does not admit miracles in the usual sense, but holds, as a theoretic position at least, by the unbroken connection of cause and effect in nature.

‡ See further discussions on this subject in Chaps. VII. and VIII.

ject, but such an inquiry we must here forego.* The theory itself it is indispensable to understand, for not only is it the part of his system in which Ritschl perhaps may claim to be most original, but, in combination with the thought of the moral end borrowed from Kant, it gives shape, as we shall see, to his entire theology.† Its divergence from the ordinary view is fundamental. Religion, as commonly understood, is primarily a bond between the soul and God, and involves an original and immediate relation of the soul to God, dimly as the consciousness of that relation may at times be present. This, however, is not the Ritschlian conception. The theory of knowledge precludes the idea of such immediate and vital bond between the soul and God, and the supposition is accordingly rejected as "mystical" and false. It is not the relation to God which is the first thing in a theory of religion, but the relation to *the world.* Religion, in fact, only arises as a means of solving the problem of the world, and of man's relation to it.‡ We shall find, as we proceed, that this idea of the "world" dominates the Ritschlian theology through-

* Some of the characteristic thoughts of the theory are later even than his first volume in 1870. The sketch in the Prolegomena of 1861 already anticipates the distinction of "religious" and "theoretic" knowledge, but still takes the view that "theology as science always depends on philosophy."—*Leben,* i., pp. 382-96.

† For general statements of the theory, see specially *R. und V.,* iii., pp. 17, 28-9, 189; *Theol. und Met.,* p. 9; *Drei ak. Reden,* pp. 10, 11. Ritschl's views had considerable influence on many outside his immediate circle. Cf., *e.g.,* Lipsius, *Dogmatik,* p. 25.

‡ Cf. *R. und V.,* iii., pp. 260–1.

out. Man's relation to the world is the basal fact which governs all others in religion. "Eternal life" itself (that favourite Johannine and Pauline expression) is but another name for "Herrschaft" (supremacy, lordship) over the world.* This fact that religion has primarily to do with man's position in the world explains why, in Ritschl's view, religion necessarily includes in it the rudiments of a *Weltanschauung*, or general theory of the world in its relations to God and man.†

The derivation of religion from man's relation to the world is on the following lines. Man, it is held, as a spiritual being, a personality, cannot but make the claim to be of higher worth than the whole natural world,‡ on which, in numberless ways he yet feels himself dependent. He ought to rule the world; yet, on his physical side, he is part of nature, and feels himself continually thwarted, opposed, hindered, by natural (including social) conditions in the attainment of his spiritual ends. Hence the fundamental problem of his existence—to find a solution of this contradiction which will enable

* iii., pp. 365, 497. For a sharp criticism of this feature of the Ritschlian system, see Frank, *Theol. A. Ritschl's*' pp. 54–6.

† Cf. *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 27–30; on *S.'s Reden*, pp. 20–23, 84, etc.

‡ "Man as a spiritual being on the one hand makes the claim to be of greater worth than the whole natural system, and, on the other, finds himself limited, hemmed in, and subjected by the latter," etc.—*Drei ak. Reden*, p. 10; cf. *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 585, ff. See Herrmann, *Die Religion*, etc., pp. 80–81, 111–14, etc., for similar views.

him to realise what he feels to be his destiny. But such a solution he can only find in the thought of a higher Power who has created and now governs the world for the ends of the spiritual life—*i.e.*, in the idea of God. Ritschl gives this turn to the proof of Kant, that either this valuation of itself by the spirit as above nature is a false imagination, or it is truth, in which case a ground for it can only be found in the assumption of a divine will which creates the world for the ends of the spiritual life.* The idea of God, therefore, is neither a result of intuition, nor of rational inference, but arises as a "postulate" which the soul makes to itself for the securing of its position in the world, and the attainment of spiritual freedom or "lordship" over the world.† It rests exclusively on this judgment of its own worth by the spirit, which also is presumably the guarantee for its truth. Fastening with this idea on the natural powers on which he feels himself dependent—so we may complete Ritschl's thought—man converts them into objects of his trust and worship, and thus arise the gods of heathenism.

With this view of the origin of religion, it is not difficult to understand why Ritschl should speak of religious truth as consisting solely in "value-

* *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 213–14. In vol. i. Ritschl keeps closer to the original Kantian form of the proof, and the theory of religion is only incidentally referred to (p. 403, E. T.).

† It is an example of the fluctuation and inexactness of expression one constantly meets with in Ritschl that we find him elsewhere speaking of man as "gaining *through* the idea of God the idea of his worth as against the world."—*R. und V.*, iii., p. 585.

judgments." Not only does the idea of God—as springing solely from this judgment of worth which man passes on himself—not rest in any degree on theoretic grounds, but guidance in the further shaping of this idea, as also the criterion of what is true and false in the various forms assumed by it, is likewise to be found only in value-judgments, *i.e.*, in the feeling of what best answers to the religious need. Seeing, further, that this idea of God does not rest on experience, but is purely a "postulate" of the spirit of man for its own ends, it is obvious that it can only be cast, just as on Kant's theory, in forms of subjective—*i.e.*, figurative, symbolical, analogical—representation, which as such have no theoretic value. This may be dignified with the name of religious "knowledge," but it is *not* knowledge in the strict sense of the word.* Even Revelation cannot lift our conceptions above the essential limitations of all religious knowledge (in the consciousness of Christ Himself they cannot rise above such limitations), though it may raise them to a more perfect, in Christianity to the *most* perfect, form, *i.e.* as representations. It is evident how near we come here to the "æsthetic" view of religion of De Wette and his school, and how difficult it is for the Ritschlians to ward off, without inconsistency, the reproach of subjectivity. For, granting even that the original

* In his first edition Ritschl speaks of the idea of God as a product of religious phantasy (*Einbildungskraft*), iii., p. 184; cf. 3rd edit., p. 210. Cf. with Kant, *Kritik of Pure Reason* (Bohn's trans.), pp. 414–16; *Krit. of Judg.* (Bernard's trans.), pp. 381–9; and see further, Chap. VIII.

judgment of worth warrants this assumption of a Power adequate to secure our position in nature, it remains true that the forms under which we represent —and alone *can* represent—this Power are symbolical, analogical, and pictorial in character.* To claim for them more would be to trespass into the forbidden domain of the theoretic.

This is perhaps the place to refer to a new distinction which we find emerging in the later forms of the theory of Ritschl—a distinction which thenceforth rules in his treatment, and gives its final shape to his dogmatics. It is the distinction of a twofold end in religion and ethics respectively, corresponding with which is a strong distinction he now begins to draw between the religious and the ethical ends in Christianity, or, rather, *attempts* to draw, for he never quite succeeds in clearing his position of inconsistency and confusion. The first trace of the new standpoint is in a letter to Diestel in 1873,† and

* Cf. Scheibe, pp. 68–71. Our representations of God, he holds, must be considered only as pictures, parables. If we ascribe to God a moral nature, or love, "this is only an image, but also the only possible way of giving expression to the objective quality in God to which religion leads back." Bender carried out this view to its logical issue, and for doing so fell under the ban. Cf. the criticism of Troeltsch, in *Zeitschrift*, 1895 and 1896, specially p. 91 of the latter.

† "I have become convinced," he writes, "that a certain consequence of reconciliation—viz., sonship to God, freedom from and over the world—must form as leading a point of view for dogmatics as the idea of the Kingdom of God. These are the two chief aims of Christianity in a practical religious and moral reference. Not only are both wanting in the traditional Dogmatics, but fail also in the representation

he evidently regards the discovery as one of great importance. The point is one usually so slightly touched on in sketches of the Ritschlian theology that we are justified in giving a little attention to it.

There is a distinction, then, Ritschl would teach us, which it is necessary to make between the ends of religion and of ethics. The two ends are united in Christianity, and reciprocally condition each other. God is the necessary postulate of both, but they are nevertheless distinct, are not deducible from each other, look in different directions, and, in general, must be carefully discriminated, if the Christian system is to be correctly apprehended. Religion, to put the matter briefly, has for its end, as the theory of religion shows, to secure for man supremacy (*Herrschaft*) over the world, and does not directly involve ethics—as *religion*, does not involve ethics at all. Our moral consciousness, on the other hand, suggests an *ethical* end of the world, and this in the form of a moral kingdom, or commonwealth of agents, acting under laws of virtue. The point in which the two ends are united is the thought of God; for the moral end, as little as the religious, is capable of realisation except on the supposition of a common author of the natural and spiritual worlds, whose own end in creation is the production of this moral kingdom.*

of the Protestant Confessions. With the idea of the Kingdom of God one cannot get further than that Christianity is a doctrine of ethics; its character as religion can only be maintained through the other idea."—*Leben*, ii., p. 148.

* This is the Kantian sequence of thought, which appears in Ritschl's first edition of *R. und V.* But the ground for it is

The contrast between the two ends is sharply wrought out by Ritschl—more sharply, perhaps, under the impression of novelty, in the first than in later editions of his dogmatic volume. The religious end is grasped by him under the scheme of dependence on God;* the ethical end under the scheme of self-activity, or freedom. The religious functions "have to do with our position in relation to God and to the world"; the moral functions "refer directly to men, and only indirectly to God, whose end in the world we fulfil through moral service in the kingdom of God." † It is charged upon theology that it has very unequally interested itself in these two ends—the doctrine of redemption having received the most minute investigation, "while the ethical apprehension of Christianity under the idea of the kingdom of God has received scant attention."‡ This twofold end has for its counterpart a distinction in Christian doctrines. Redemption, justification, eternal life, *e.g.*, are properly religious notions; the Kingdom of God is an ethical notion—more strictly, through its connection with the idea of God, whose end in the world it is, a "religious-ethical" notion.§ It is this distinction—

logically lost when Ritschl later departs from the idea of an *a priori*, unconditionally-binding moral law, and regards conscience, apparently, as an empirical growth in society. See his lecture *Ueber das Gewissen* (1876).

* *R. und V.*, iii., p. 9 (1st edit.); iii., pp. 14, 30 (3rd edit.)

† iii., p. 196.

‡ iii., p. 11.

§ As remarked above, the contrast is more sharply preserved in the first than in later editions. In the first edition the Kingdom of God appears almost exclusively from the

and here we have a point not always observed—which leads Ritschl in the opening of his third volume to declare that "Christianity is not to be compared to a circle, with one centre, so much as to an ellipse, which is controlled by two *foci*."* One illustration may be taken from a subject which will come before us afterwards more fully—viz., the importance attached to this distinction by Ritschl in his treatment of the doctrine of Justification in its relation to good works. The religious and ethical ends, Ritschl allows, are so far connected that the ethical end can only be reached on the basis of the religious relation. In this sense justification is a pre-requisite of holy living. But justification in itself—so Ritschl strangely argues—has nothing to do with the production of good works, or with any moral end. It is, in itself considered, a purely religious notion, and is directed solely to the end of securing for man that supremacy over the world which is Ritschl's expression for the eternal life.† Any bearing it has on moral results is indirect.

ethical point of view, though, as the name imports, it has a religious reference as well (God's end is the ethical end of the Kingdom): in the later editions it is, on the other hand, declared to be "a directly religious notion" (iii., p. 30), and to have a "religious-ethical" aim (p. 55). Such expressions are not found in the earlier mode of statement. Even as a religious notion, however, it continues to be connected distinctively with the ethical end, *e.g.*, "the aim of the universal moral Kingdom of God"—"the ethical idea of Christianity under the idea of the Kingdom of God" (iii., pp. 31, 32). It is difficult to bring Ritschl's expressions to a unity.

* P. 11. His biographer says "perhaps three": cf. *Leben*, ii., p. 184.

† *R. und V.*, pp. 36, 465, 503, etc. (cf. 1st edit., p. 24).

Only in this way, Ritschl thinks, can we effectually safeguard the Protestant doctrine. "The general ground," he says, "on which the Catholic view must be rejected is, that the marks in which Christianity is religion, and those which designate its moral aim, dare not be confused with each other, if Christianity in both relations is not to be falsified."* The combination of justification with sanctification is "apocryphal," even to the extent of regarding the latter as the aim of the former; and justification is declared to have "its direct aim in leading man into the eternal life, which is present in the experiences of freedom, or lordship over the world."† No sound Protestant will question the propriety of rigorously distinguishing justification from sanctification; but the two have nevertheless an indissoluble relation, and to maintain that justification has no direct aim or bearing (*Abzweckung*) on good works, or holy living, is seriously to misconceive its nature.‡

In closing this chapter, and preparatory to entering on the direct consideration of the Christian system, we may now quote Ritschl's formal definition of Christianity, the significance of which will perhaps already begin to be apparent:—

"Christianity, then, is the monotheistic, perfectly spiritual and moral religion, which, on the ground of

* iii., p. 103.

† P. 467.

‡ P. 503. See discussion in Chap. VI. No trace of this view appears in vol. i., where, on the contrary, justification is declared to have "a telic reference to regeneration and the fulfilling of the law by faith" (E. T., p. 172).

the life of its Founder, as redeeming and founding the Kingdom of God, consists in the freedom of divine sonship, includes in itself the impulse to action from love which aims at the moral organisation of mankind, and lays the foundation of blessedness at once in divine sonship and in the Kingdom of God." *

* *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 14–15.

CHAPTER IV

POSITIVE PRINCIPLE OF THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION — REVELATION AND HOLY SCRIPTURE — GENERAL VIEW OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

"Revelation-Worth" of Christ the Positive Principle of Christian Theology — Scope of this Principle — Place of Christianity in History of Religions—Christ and the "Community"—The Idea of Revelation—Fact not Theory — Ambiguity of the Ritschlian Concept — Christian Apologetic—Origin of Personal Faith: the Impression of Christ—Faith and the Gospel Records—Criticism and Miracle—Ritschl on Miracle—The "Scientific" Proof of Christianity: Agreement with antecedent "Postulates."

Place of Holy Scripture—The New Testament a Witness to Primitive Christianity—Bearing of Old Testament on Interpretation and Canonicity—The Scriptures not "a Rule of Faith."

General Sketch of Christianity—As realising the Idea of the Perfect Spiritual and Moral Religion—As related to Sin —The Religion of Redemption.

WE come now—still endeavouring to interpret Ritschl—to deal with Christianity on its positive side as the religion of Revelation: that perfect spiritual and moral religion in which complete provision is made for the satisfaction of the spirit of man in respect of the two ends already specified—the religious and the ethical. The problems arising out of both of

these ends Christianity solves through its idea of God as that is obtained—and is alone to be obtained—from the Revelation God has made of Himself in Jesus Christ. The positive principle of Christianity, therefore, Ritschlianism finds in the Person and life-work of its Founder, from which, as mirrored in the Gospel witness and in the Apostolic writings, the materials of theology are exclusively to be drawn.*

Nothing could be more satisfactory in itself than this insistence by Ritschlianism on Christ as the positive principle of the Christian Revelation. It is to be granted also that Ritschl and his followers are quite in earnest with this idea of Revelation. At an early stage (1856) Ritschl separated himself from Vatke, Biedermann, and Zeller, with whom he had formerly agreed, expressly on the ground that they failed to do justice to this notion.† To Ritschl and his school Jesus was truly a Person who stood in a unique relation to God, and to His world-end; who perfectly revealed God, and identified Himself with His purpose; who not only founded the Kingdom of God, but was the concrete embodiment of its principle —archetypal man in His relation of sonship to God; whose activity was not only Kingdom-founding, but redeeming. Jesus and His religion thus stand in inseparable relation with each other. He is part of His own religion; not, like other founders of religion,

* The "Revelation-value of Christ" is posited as "the ground of knowledge for all the problems of theology."—*R. und V.*, iii., pp. 6, 8; cf. ii., pp. 13, 14; *Unterricht*, p. 2; *Leben*, ii., p. 193.

† *Leben*, i., p. 279.

separable in idea from the religion which he founds.* When, however, we come to closer dealing with this all-important concept of Revelation, we cannot allow that the statements we obtain from Ritschl and his followers are either clear or adequate. And it has been indicated in a previous chapter that the claim to derive everything in theology from the pure Revelation of Christ is far from borne out by examination of the system itself.

Before entering on this, however, a word may be said on the scope of the principle first laid down, and on the place of Christianity in the general scheme of Revelation, and history of religion. This Ritschlian principle of the sole Revelation-value of Christ means more than simply that Christ's is the highest Revelation, which, for this reason, supersedes every other. It is intended, for one thing, as a denial of the right of what is called "Natural Theology" to a place in Christianity. Theoretic reason, it is held, affords us no knowledge of God. Nature, also, affords us no Revelation of the Creator, from which inferences may be drawn, of which Christianity can make use, as to His existence, attributes, or the principles of His government.† At the same time, previous and lower stages of historical Revelation are not denied, as in the Old

* *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 364-7 ; *Unterricht*, pp. 19-22 ; *Leben*, ii., p. 193.

† Yet Kant's moral proof, which Ritschl accepts, is surely a form of philosophical theology. In rejecting the testimony of nature to God, Ritschlianism comes into conflict with clear statements of Scripture—*e.g.*, Acts xiv. 17 ; Rom. i. 20. Truth is surely not less Christian because it is also rational, and in harmony with God's natural manifestations. Cf. Chap. VIII.

Testament, whose importance and genetic connection with the New Testament Ritschl fully recognises.* Even in relation to these, however, Christianity appears as the perfect religion, and the Revelation of Christ as that which alone possesses normative value for us.† But, further, Ritschl holds that the specific peculiarity of Christianity as the perfect religion can only be understood and made sure through comparison with the other kinds and stages of religion in history, *i.e.* through comparison with the general idea of religion as obtained from these.‡ We have already seen what this idea of religion is, and its application in Apologetics will meet us immediately. As regards the apprehension of the Revelation, Ritschl lays stress on the fact that this must be from the standpoint of

* Cf. *R. und V.*, ii., p. 13 : "The divine Revelation in the Israelitish people extends itself in distinct periods, and corresponding stages of progressive enrichment, through a long space of time, until it reaches its goal in the perfected Revelation through Christ ;" and iii., p. 10 : "The concrete notion of the one, supernatural, Almighty God is also in the Old Testament united with the aim of the Kingdom of God, and with the idea of redemption."

† Cf. Herrmann's *Verkehr*, p. 49 (E. T., p. 53).

‡ *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 3, 9. In this connection a curious difference is to be noted between the first and later editions. In the first edition there is a recognition of lower stages of human fellowship as preparatory for the Kingdom of God, and it is declared, "God loves the human race under the point of view of its destination for the Kingdom of God."—iii., pp. 241-50. In later editions the standpoint is altered, and the love of God is viewed as directed only on the community founded by Christ.—iii., p. 268 ff. (3rd edit.). This connects itself with the fact that the Fatherhood of God in Ritschl is limited to believers. Cf. *Leben*, ii., p. 199, quoted below, p. 115.

the community, and not from that of the Revealer Himself. Christ as Founder of the kingdom of God stands *over against* His disciples. His standpoint must therefore be distinguished from theirs; and theology reflects the contents of the Revelation as it appears from *their* standpoint—*i.e.* under its aspect of value to them—not from His.* Hence the principle formerly met with, that the theologian must reckon himself *in* the community, and be a sharer of its experiences, as an indispensable condition of the fulfilment of his task.

The questions which now fall to be investigated in this chapter are those which are usually comprised under theological *Prolegomena*. They spring naturally out of the Ritschlian emphasising of the idea of positive Revelation in Christ. What, we are compelled to ask, in the Ritschlian view, is meant by Revelation? How is the fact of such a Revelation as we have in the Christian religion to be proved or verified? How does the Revelation we have in Christ stand related to the Holy Scriptures? What place has miracle in Revelation? For this is specially where the ambiguity about which we are concerned in the treatment of this notion comes in. Most theologians of the modern school will admit the necessity and reality of Revelation, and will even agree in finding the principle of the absolute Revelation of God in Christ.† But do they mean by Revelation a truly supernatural event?

* *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 1-5.

† Thus Biedermann, Lipsius, Pfleiderer, etc., all affirm Revelation, and find the absolute principle of it in Christ. Yet they reject miracle.

Or is Revelation more than the acme of religious insight and originality? If not, we have not a conception of Revelation which is adequate to Christianity. If it is, we have transcended natural powers, and are in the region of "miracle"—which yet the modern view of the world denies.

On this first and crucial question of the *nature* of Revelation, it will be found difficult to extract from the Ritschlian theologians—or from Ritschl himself—any satisfying light. The exalted terms in which these theologians speak of the Revelation of God in Christ would justify the expectation of an unambiguous admission of its supernatural source. But this we do not find. Their standpoint is that on the nature of the Revelation they attempt no *theory*, but repose simply on the *fact*. The Revelation is there, and approves itself by its immediate witness, and by the experience we have of its power to do for us what is demanded from a perfect religion. But *how* it came to be there,—how Christ came to be the unique Being He was, and to have the spiritual equipment for His vocation He possessed,—how He grew into that knowledge of God and His purpose, and into that unity of will with God, which He manifested,—through what means, under what psychological conditions, within what limitations, God communicated Himself to Him, —all these are questions which it declines to discuss. Christ's Person is a mystery which it is vain for theology to attempt to illustrate or explain.* Much

* *R. und V.*, ii., p. 96; iii., p. 426. In the latter passage Ritschl says: "How the Person of Christ came to be what it is, and to possess the ethical and religious value that it does,

speculation, none the less, goes on in the school on the nature, laws, and limits of Christ's self-consciousness, and not a little error and imperfection are attributed to it on subjects lying outside His special mission.* A further ambiguity is imported into the notion of Revelation by the vague way in which it is extended to cover *all* religions. We have seen that the reality of Old Testament Revelation is acknowledged by Ritschl; but in other places the notion is universalised.† "A Revelation," we are told, "forms the point of organisation for every connected religious view of the world. This factor appears also in the stages of religion in different modifications. . . . No religion can be represented as perfect of its kind in which this mark of Revelation is either denied or treated as indifferent." ‡ Revelation in Christianity would thus seem to differ from the same factor in other religions in degree of completeness rather than in kind. And in every case it is a mystery. "The reception of

is no object of theological investigation, because the problem lies outside of *every* kind of investigation."—*R. und V.*, iii., p. 426. Herrmann, in a Giessen lecture on Revelation, dismisses such inquiries with the remark that "so lofty an investigation may engage the saints in glory, but for us men time is too valuable to be spent in dealing with a theme so far beyond our reach."

* Cf. Baldensperger, Wendt, etc.

† On the difficulty of reconciling this universal—or indeed any—notion of Revelation with the principles of the school, see note p. 89, and Chaps. VII. and VIII.

‡ iii., p. 192. So Schultz, in his *Grundriss der chr. Apologetik*, says: "Every historical religion presupposes a special historical Revelation of God, which determines the character of the piety present in it" (p. 18).

divine Revelation," it is declared, "by the founders of religion is a mystery, veiled from themselves, as from us." * This position, we shall see below, is practically that of the whole school.†

Still, no theology, professing to rest on divine Revelation, can free itself absolutely from the obligation of stating the grounds of its faith in the reality of that Revelation, and of its acceptance of it as perfect and final. This raises the question of the *proof* and *verifiableness* of the Christian Revelation—in other words, of a Christian Apologetic. Ritschl himself does not enter the apologetic field, or touches on it only incidentally. "Every apologetic tendency," his biographer says, "was perfectly foreign to his theology." ‡ His standpoint is throughout that of one *within* the Christian community. He presupposes faith in Christ as the condition of His work, and does not specially investigate the origin of that faith. His exhibition of the Christian system may be said to be *his* contribution to apologetics, in the sense of showing its harmony with the requirements of a perfect religion. But the hints he occasionally throws out evince that between him and his followers there exists a general agreement as to the lines which the new Christian apologetic must follow.

* *Ueber das Gewissen* (1876), p. 6.

† Cf. Schultz, as above, pp. 16–22, 81; and Herrmann, Giessen lecture on *Offenbarung*, pp. 1–10. Schultz says: "Through this uniqueness of His religious life, even His own personality is for Jesus a mystery known only to God, the understanding of which lies beyond all earthly standard, and can disclose itself only to faith."

‡ *Leben*, ii., p. 167.

Two questions are involved here—the first as to the origin of faith in the individual, the second as to a scientific proof of the truth of Revelation such as is demanded for the purposes of theology. These questions the Ritschlian theologians rightly distinguish. First, as respects the *original* production of faith in Christ as the Revealer of God, it may be said to be their common position that such faith is not the result of any process of argument, or of external proof (from miracles, prophecies, and the like), but springs immediately from the impression made by Christ on the soul historically confronted with Him. Revelation generally, it is held, does not consist in a sum of doctrines, or even of facts, but is associated with any event which produces in us a vivid immediate realisation of the presence and working of God.* But this realisation of God's presence is awakened in us in a powerful and pre-eminent degree by the historical manifestation of Jesus Christ. We need no intermediate witness; His image in the Gospels speaks for itself. In Christ we feel that God is truly drawing near to us. We need no other proof of the fact than the direct, spiritual perception of it; just as we need no other evidence of the sun's

* Schultz, *Apologetik*, p. 20; Herrmann, *Verkehr*, p. 14. What such language means on the theory of the school it is difficult to determine. There is (the Revelation in Christ apart) no real objective manifestation of God in nature or history, else a natural theology would be possible; there is no direct communication of God to the soul, else there would be mysticism; there would seem to remain only a subjective imagination, springing out of the soul's own postulates and desires.

presence than the experience of his light and warmth. Miracles and prophecies could add nothing to the certainty awakened in us by this immediate impression we receive from Christ's own manifestation.*

Faith in the Christian Revelation, accordingly, connects itself with the historical fact of Christ's appearance. This, however—and here is the curious paradox of the school—is not to be understood as if it depended in any degree on historical testimony.† We do not first establish the genuineness and historicity of the evangelical records, and from this rise to faith in Christ: our faith, rather, rests on a "judgment of worth," guaranteeing at once the reality of the Revelation in Christ and the essential truth of the representation of Him in the Gospels.‡ There is much that is salutary in this teaching, though it is vain, where *facts* are concerned, to hope to cut faith free altogether from dependence on historical testimony.§

* This idea of the production of faith through the immediate impression (*Eindruck*) we receive from Christ is the special thought of Herrmann's *Verkehr*, and indeed the keynote of all his later writings. We anticipate here a little, for purposes of exposition, what more properly belongs to a later chapter.

† "It is impossible," Herrmann says, "that religion should depend on a historical judgment," which could only give probability. "It has nothing to do with a historical judgment." We cannot believe on the testimony of others—even of Apostles. —*Verkehr*, pp. 57, 64 (E. T., 60, 66-7). Cf. Otto Ritschl's criticism in article on *Der geschichtliche Christus*, in *Zeitschrift*, 1893, pp. 399-402 (referred to below, Chapter VII.).

‡ *Verkehr*, pp. 55-6 (E. T., p. 59).

§ Cf. Otto Ritschl, as above. Ritschlianism must make its choice. It must either hold with the idealists that religion is

Only, unfortunately, Ritschlianism does not stop here, but goes on largely to unsettle the foundation for faith in the Gospel witness to Christ it has itself laid. This impression we receive from Christ, we are warned, is not to be understood as if it stood sponsor for all the details of the Evangelical narratives, or withdrew the latter from the freest handling of criticism. Faith must rest on a basis of entire independence of criticism and its results. In its self-security it can allow the historical criticism of the New Testament the fullest play. This does not mean simply that it has a certainty, prior to investigation, that criticism will not succeed in overthrowing the historicity of the narrative. It means that it remains untouched, however destructive that criticism may be *—surely a suicidal position. In particular, faith does not guarantee the reality of the recorded miracles of Christ, but rather yields up the narratives of these as a prey to the modern historical spirit. We shall see afterwards that the attitude of the Ritschlian school, speaking generally, is unfavourable to the admission of miracle.† "Miracle" is defined, in the way to which we are

independent altogether of questions of historical fact; or, if it bases it on facts, it must consent to vindicate a place for these in the general scheme of history.

* Herrmann goes so far as to say that even if historical inquiry should resolve the bulk of the Gospel history into legend, still "for such an one the chief fact would remain a for us" (pp. 66, 191). The E. T. softens down this passage into "questioning some of the records," etc. (p. 70).

† It looks askance on it, as incompatible with the modern scientific view of the world. Cf. Ritschl, *Unterricht*, pp. 14, 15; *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 430, 582; Schultz, *Apologetik*, pp. 21, 23, etc. The subject is further discussed in Chapter VII.

becoming accustomed, as an event or experience which yields us an immediate impression of God's presence or action for our help. But this is a "value-judgment," and does not imply any real departure from the ordinary course of nature. Miracle is a "religous," not a "scientific" notion.* In any case, faith has no interest in asserting the reality of occurrences which contravene the established order of the world. The application of this canon to the Gospel history has sufficiently sweeping results. It cuts off the miraculous birth of Jesus at one end of the history, and His bodily resurrection at the other, and practically surrenders to a rationalistic criticism all the wonders of the ministry that lie between.† That Jesus has overcome death, and now lives in glory, is, indeed, a "thought of faith"—a conviction born of the impression we receive of His unique relation to God, and the victorious power of His earthly life;‡ but that He rose in the body from the dead on the third day is, according to most of these theologians, no essential part of the Christian faith. The earthly life of Jesus closes for them, as for the ordinary anti-miraculous criticism, with the cross.§

* Ritschl uses the word "supernatural" in the sense of that which transcends the natural limitations of family, class, sex, etc. Cf. *R. und V.*, iii., p. 267; *Unterricht*, p. 6.

† Cf. Herrmann, *Verkehr*, pp. 64, 83, 190-99, etc. On the exceptions to be made to the above statement in the case of Kaftan, Häring, etc., see Chapter VII.

‡ Cf. Herrmann, *Verkehr*, pp. 236-9 (E. T., pp. 221 ff.); Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, i., pp. 75, 76 (E. T., p. 86).

§ Cf. Harnack and Herrmann as above; Herrmann in *Zeitschrift*, 1894, pp. 277-8; Lobstein, in *do.*, 1892, pp. 343 ff.; Wendt, *Die Lehre Jesu*, ii., p. 243, etc. See Chapter VII.

NOTE.—*Ritschl on Miracle.* It is difficult to catch precisely Ritschl's own attitude to miracle, and specially to the Lord's Resurrection. In his first sketch of a *Dogmatik* (1853), he already takes the ground that a miracle "has its truth, not for science, but for religious experience," and declares that the transgression of natural law, which is foreign to our experience, is no necessary presupposition of it (*Leben*, i., p. 234). In his second sketch (1856) we have a more positive attitude to miracle. "As the miracles of Christ's birth and resurrection are only manifestations of the exceptional position of His Person, so is also the power over nature which He shows, quite independently of the criticism of particular miracles, a necessary attribute of one in whom is accomplished not only the restitution, but the perfect grounding and representation of the divine image" (*Leben*, i., p. 282). In the *Unterricht* he speaks in a way which seems satisfactory of the "re-awakening" (*Auferweckung*) of Christ by the power of God" as "the perfecting, in a manner thoroughly consistent with, and suitable to, the worth of His Person, of the Revelation given in Him" (p. 21). Yet the remarks on miracle on an earlier page (p. 14) repudiate the view of miracle which regards it as contravening the scientific assumption of "a connection through natural law of the whole world," and declare it to be no religious task to recognise recorded miracles "as divine effects contrary to natural laws." This seems to preclude a real rising of Christ from the dead, and we are probably right in interpreting his expressions in the general sense of a life in glory after death. In *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 430, 582, he uses language which implies that Christ performed extraordinary works, but still not such as went beyond the bounds of natural law. His whole position is extremely vague.

The personal impression of Christ thus explains the origin of faith in the individual; it is not yet, however, *a scientific* justification of the truth of the Christian Revelation such as theology demands. Has Ritschlianism, then, anything to offer in the way of

scientific Apologetic? Our remarks in an earlier chapter have already shown that it has, though its apologetic goes on widely different lines from that to which we are accustomed. It has nothing to do, as already observed, with questions of genuineness and authenticity of books, with arguments from miracles and prophecy, with supports from natural theology—though it has, as we shall see, a natural theology of its own, in which the nerve of its "scientific" proof lies—in short, with external "evidences" of any sort. In strictness, its apologetic is directed to the proof of the truth of the *religion* contained in the Christian Revelation, rather to the demonstration of *its supernatural origin*—an origin in Revelation being assumed as in some sense underlying *all* religions. Briefly stated, the proof consists in first establishing from the study of man's nature, and of the facts of his religious history, a general theory or idea of religion, and of the ends aimed at in religion, then in showing that the Christian religion perfectly corresponds with this—answers to the "postulate" of man's highest good, and fulfils the conditions necessary for its realisation. This is what Ritschl means when he says, in words above quoted, that the idea of Christianity is first secured "through comparison of it with other kinds and stages of religion," and that "first with the assistance of the general history of religion can that specific peculiarity of Christianity be detected which must be preserved in all relations of theological knowledge." * It will be remembered how, in his first edition, he declares it to be the

* *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 8, 9.

task of Christian theology "to prove the Christian thought of reconciliation by the thought of the Kingdom of God, in which Kant, in a purely philosophical way, recognises the final end of the world."* This is modified later into the more general expression —"Its representation in theology will therefore come to a conclusion in the proof that the Christian ideal of life, and no other, altogether satisfies the claims of the human spirit on a knowledge of things"—*i.e.*, yields a practically satisfying view of the world.† We shall see in a later chapter that Ritschl's followers —Herrmann, Kaftan, etc.—have taken up this task of apologetic more systematically than he did himself.‡ In its largest scope, the Ritschlian apologetic aims at more than simply proving the truth of the Christian Revelation. Its aim is to show that Christianity not only satisfies the religious needs of men, but "solves the problem of the world."§

Closely connected with the doctrine of Revelation in Ritschl is his theory of Holy Scripture. The position

* iii., p. 14 (1st edit.).

† iii., p. 25 (3rd edit.).

‡ See Chapter VII. The last section of Herrmann's work, *Die Religion*, etc., is devoted to "the Dogmatic Proof of the Christian View of the World." Schultz's *Apologetik* aims at establishing "the right of Christianity to be regarded as the absolutely perfect appearance of religion, in opposition to those who contest its permanent significance" (p. 1). But the writer of the school who has specially developed its apologetic side is Kaftan in his *Wahrheit*. His positions are discussed later.

§ *R. und V.*, iii., p. 268; cf. pp. 190, 215, etc.; Schultz, p. 118 ff.

he lays down at the outset here is thoroughly Protestant and sound. "The Christian doctrine is to be drawn *alone* from Holy Scripture." * This, however, as soon appears, is not to be understood in the sense of the old Protestant doctrine, as if the Scriptures, through an inherent quality of inspiration, possessed normative authority. Ritschl not only rejects, but shows a positive repugnance to the doctrine of inspiration—"the perilous (*misslich*) medium of a theory of inspiration,"† as he calls it —and manifests scarcely less dislike to any suggestion of a "testimonium Spiritus Sancti." ‡ Whence, then, the value of Holy Scripture, and how comes it to be defined as the sole source of theology? It is first to be observed that this function is assigned only to the New Testament Scriptures. The Old Testament has its indispensable place, but it is not that of source. And the normative value even of the New Testament arises, not from any special inspiration of their authors, as if the Apostles possessed the Holy Spirit in greater measure than other Christians,§ but simply from the fact that, in words cited from Hofmann, these writings are "a perfect monument of the

* *Unterricht*, p. 2. Ritschl connects this with the words of the Art. Schmalc., ii., 2.—"Verbum dei condit articulos fidei, et praeterea nemo, ne angelus quidem," but the sense is quite different. See more fully on this subject, *R. und V.*, ii., pp. 9–18. Here also it is maintained—"Theology has to draw its authentic content from the books of the New Testament, and from no other source" (p. 18).

† *R. und V.*, ii., p. 11.

‡ Pp. 10, 12, etc.

§ P. 11.

beginnings of Christianity."* An authentic knowledge of the Christian religion and Revelation "can be drawn only from documents which stand near the foundation-epoch of the Church, and from no others."† The Gospels and Epistles answer to this condition—the first as exhibiting the life-work of the Founder of the community, the second as showing the original state of faith in the community, ere yet it was troubled by those foreign influences which already in the second century had begun to affect it.‡ The value of the New Testament Scriptures lies, therefore, solely in their historical witness. Next, as respects the Old Testament, we have learned above that Ritschl recognises a genetic relation between the Old Testament and the New. But the distinctive value of the Old Testament Scriptures lies for him in the aid they afford to the correct *interpretation* of the New Testament.§ Christianity, indeed, is something new, but as a religion originating within the Old Covenant, its conceptions and terminology are so rooted in Old Testament ideas, so saturated with Old Testament associations, that the only method of obtaining a right understanding of them is to approach them along the line of a careful Old Testament exegesis. "The theological importance of the Old Testament consists in this, that from it the historical presuppositions of the Christian Revelation are rightly understood."‖ Another important use which Ritschl

* P. 11.

† P. 13.

‡ P. 13; *Unterricht*, p. 2.

§ Pp. 105, etc.; *Unterricht*, p. 2.

‖ Pp. 10, 11. In his treatment of the Old Testament, Ritschl

makes of the Old Testament is to apply it as a test of Canonicity to the books of the New Testament—meaning by Canonicity, however, as before, simply the right of these books to be regarded as genuine productions of the first age. Those books are held to be genuine which are in accord with the religious conceptions of the Old Testament. And this criterion is believed to be the more reliable that the writers of the post-apostolic age show themselves incapable of entering with precision into the thoughts of the Old Testament. The application of this canon led Ritschl to accept as genuine the bulk of the New Testament writings, though latterly he seems to have become less sure of some of his positions.*

A weighty consideration still remains. Ritschl exalts the New Testament Scriptures to the rank of primary witnesses to that primitive Christianity to which it is the boast of his theology to lead us back;

accepts the advanced critical position of a late, if not post-exilian origin of the law.—Pp. 186, ff.

* Cf. *Leben*, i., pp. 373, 381; ii., p. 169. *R. und V.*, ii., p. 14. As early as 1845 we find Ritschl breaking from Baur's views on the Canon, and accepting, besides the four great Pauline Epistles, those to the Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, and 1 Thessalonians. Even at that date, also, he inclined to accept the genuineness of John's Gospel (*Leben*, i., p. 124). In his work on the *Old Catholic Church* (1857), he accepts James, 1 Peter, John's Gospel, etc. To the end of his life he had doubts regarding Ephesians, and rejected the Pastoral Epistles (*R. und V.*, ii., pp. 224, 226, etc.). The Apocalypse he was at first disposed to regard, with Baur, as Johannine (*Leben*, i., p. 124). Afterwards he was led to adopt the view of Vischer, etc., that it was a Christian book based on a Jewish writing (*Leben*, ii., p. 460; *R. und V.*, ii., p. 93). On his later doubts and views, cf. *Leben*, i. p. 292; ii., pp. 459–60.

but it must not be supposed that, on this account, he holds himself bound to accept, in any single article, what they teach. The Scriptures, whatever place of honour may be assigned to them, are in no sense a "rule of faith" to Ritschl and his school. The Gospel which they draw from these Scriptures is an expurgated Gospel—a Gospel divested, in deference to the modern spirit, of its supernatural accompaniments, and transformed into a pattern fashioned according to their own presuppositions. The books of Scripture, as we have seen above, are given up to the freest treatment of criticism; the Gospels are stripped of their miracles, and the Virgin-birth, and resurrection of Jesus from the tomb, are denied, or set aside as unessential; the greatest freedom is used in accepting or rejecting the recorded discourses of Jesus.* It is the same with the doctrinal teaching of the Epistles. Those elements of the primitive faith which do not harmonise with the postulates of the system, or are thought unsuitable to modern requirements, are put aside as of no permanent importance. The Apostolic teaching on the Person of Christ, for instance—on His pre-existence, His divine nature, His future advent—is in this way dismissed as unessential; the Logos doctrine of the Fourth Gospel is frankly surrendered,

* *E.g.* "With regard to the eschatology, no one can say in detail what proceeds from Jesus, and what from the disciples," etc.—Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, i., p. 60 (E. T., p. 66). The post-resurrection sayings and instructions, as on baptism, the preaching of the Gospel to every creature, etc., are, of course, rejected.

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in the interests, it is said, of faith itself * ; the Pauline views on the law, sin, death, etc., are criticised, modified, or rejected, at pleasure.† We allude to these matters at present, not by way of reproach, but simply as showing in how lax a sense the Scriptures are accepted as a source of doctrine, and how widely the new theology deems itself at liberty to diverge, when it sees cause, from the original Christianity—which yet, with curious inconsistency, it claims to reproduce. The Christianity it offers to our age may, in its judgment, be an improvement on the old, but it is assuredly not the Christianity of the primitive Church, or of its Scriptural monuments.‡ In light of its own free handling

* Cf. Kaftan, in his Eisenach lecture on "The Relation of the Evangelical Faith to the Logos Doctrine," reprinted in *Zeitschrift*, 1897. "It is a necessary consequence of the evangelical faith," he says, "that the Logos doctrine must be given up." At the same time, he declares, "it is impossible to go back to those other forms which were the ruling ones in the primitive Christian community."—Pp. 8-11.

† Paul, *e.g.*, has misunderstood the Old Testament doctrine of the law, errs in his views of retribution, of the connection of sin and death, etc.—*R. und V.*, ii., pp. 308-9 ; iii., pp. 290, 341, etc. See below, Chap. VI.

‡ Stählin, criticising Feyerabend in *All. Evang.-Luth. Kirchenzeitung* (February 7th, 1896) says—"Ritschl teaches, indeed, that the material for theological doctrine is to be borrowed from the corresponding representations of the original consciousness of the community, therefore from the Scriptures of the New Testament. In what way Ritschl follows this his own maxim, with what surprising facility the New Testament writers have, under his guidance, re shaped themselves, and become his docile pupils, with what astonishing art he knows how to bring about an agreement

of the sources, the claim of this school to censure "orthodox" and "liberals" for their supposed departure from primitive forms seems not a little absurd.

It will now be proper that we take a brief comprehensive glance at the manner in which Ritschl conceives of the Christian religion as a whole, at once as preparatory to the study of the special doctrines, and as showing the dependence of the system on Christ as its Revelation-principle. There is a distinction which may conveniently be made at the outset. Just as in the study of the laws of force and motion, we first consider these laws in their theoretical purity without regard to the retarding and other effects of friction, then, in applied mechanics, take the effects of friction into account; so, in the study of Christianity, we may first regard it in its relation to the idea of religion simply, *i.e.*, as realising the ends of a perfect religion, without respect to the disturbing influence of sin, and, second, may consider it in its relation to this disturbing influence as a religion of Redemption.* We get, perhaps, most easily to the heart of the Ritschlian scheme when we observe

with the clearest testimonies of the New Testament, if they are unwilling of themselves to chime in with his peculiar opinions, is too well known to need a closer investigation. . . . Consequently the Scriptural principle, and the emphasising of the Canonicity of Holy Scripture, sinks down to the merest illusion."

* Cf., *e.g.*, Ritschl's *Unterricht*, Parts I. and II.: 1. Of the Kingdom of God; 2. Of the Reconciliation through Christ. See also Schultz's *Grundriss d. Dogmatik.*

how these aspects are related, and how, under both, Christianity is made dependent on the Person of Christ.

The doctrine of Christianity in its general character as *religion*—to take this first—connects itself with what was formerly said of the Ritschlian distinction of the twofold end in religion and ethics. Christianity, Ritschl will tell us, approves itself as the perfect religion in a threefold respect: (1) as perfectly realising the religious end in providing man with the means of attaining complete spiritual freedom, and superiority to the conditions of his natural existence —"Herrschaft" over the world; (2) as perfectly realising the moral end, in providing in the Kingdom of God an end suitable to the highest requirements of his moral nature; and (3) as placing these two ends in their proper relations to each other—the moral in subordination to the religious. For while, as formerly shown, the ethical end is held to be distinct from the religious, it is also held not to be realisable except on condition of that perfect freedom which it is the aim of religion to secure. How, then, does Christianity solve the problems arising out of these two ends? It solves them in both relations through its Revelation of God as a Being of perfect love, whose world-end is the production of a moral Kingdom in humanity—such a Kingdom as Jesus came to found. The mode of the solution is the following. First, as respects the *religious* end, it is shown how spiritual freedom, supremacy over the world, the blessedness of the eternal life—all names, on the Ritschlian theory, for the same thing—arise naturally from the faith in

God's Fatherly Providence which Christ's religion inspires.* Through faith in God, as Christ reveals Him, we attain the assurance that the world has been created, and is governed, with perfect wisdom, and by Almighty power, for the highest ends of the spiritual life. This enables us to accept our lot in it with trust, humility, and patience; to believe, though we are unable to trace it, that things are working for our good; to appropriate even trials and sufferings as aids to our spiritual growth; to judge of afflictions no longer as tokens of the Divine displeasure, but as means of discipline for ends of love. † But in the next place, this new religious position carries with it the attainment of the *moral* end. The same faith which raises us to spiritual freedom, impels us to appropriate God's ethical end in his Kingdom as our own. For Jesus is not only the Revealer of God, but the Founder of His Kingdom among men. In this relation He occupies a unique position. From the standpoint of faith, the purpose of founding the Kingdom of God is conceived of as anteceding creation itself and prescribing the end of creation—as God's "world-end." ‡ And as Jesus is the centre of this Divine purpose,—

* "Faith in the Fatherly Providence of God is the Christian view of the world in brief."—*Unterricht*, p. 48. It is a reproach frequently brought against Ritschlianism (as by Lipsius, Pünjer, Nippold) that it resolves itself at bottom, notwithstanding its denunciations of rationalism, practically into the old rationalistic triad of trust in God, faithfulness in one's calling, and universal love to man. Cf. Nippold, i., pp. 261, 264; ii., p. 45. There are, however, higher elements.

† *Unterricht*, p. 48.

‡ *R. und V.*, iii., p. 266.

He in whose personal life this end of God first comes to view, and is realised in deed,—who exhibits in Himself the type of humanity as destined for the Kingdom of God,—He is justly regarded as the original object of the love of God, and the love of God to the members of His Kingdom is to be thought of as mediated through Him.*

This is to regard Christianity simply as *religion*; but it is next to be observed that the problem is not thus simple in actuality. The presence of *sin* in the world, with the accompanying consciousness of *guilt*, separating man from God, introduces a serious complication, which profoundly modifies the situation. This guilt-consciousness forms a bar to that trust in God which is the fundamental fact in the religious life,—a bar which can only be removed by the assurance of forgiveness, and the restoration of confidence in God's love,—while the natural will, bound up in self-seeking desires, is estranged from the ends of God's Kingdom. To remove the bar to trust in God by giving this assurance of forgiveness, and to break down this hostility, and raise men to the blessedness of spiritual freedom, and of life in the service of the Kingdom of God—these are the new aims which a perfect religion must set before it. It follows that the work of Jesus, in bringing to mankind the perfect religious satisfaction, must be not only Kingdom-founding, but redeeming. The manner of this redemption will engage our attention hereafter; meanwhile its effects, as respects the sinner, are twofold—(1) *Justification*,

* *Unterricht*, pp. 19, 20; *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 265-6, 366; *Leben*, ii., p. 196.

the Divine act of forgiveness and adoption, which conveys to the sinner, under condition of faith, the assurance that his guilt forms no barrier to his access to God, and to the enjoyment of fellowship with Him; and (2) *Reconciliation*, the removal of the sinner's active enmity to God, and his acceptance of the Divine end as his own.* For the former spirit of distrust, under the altered conditions which result, is now substituted the spirit of filial confidence, the response to the Revelation of God's Fatherly love and grace in Christ;† and the way is open for the attainment to the fullest extent of the ends of religion and of moral service before designated. One would have expected from this concatenation of thoughts that justification would have been viewed as having a direct bearing on the aim of moral service, as well as on religious freedom; but we saw in last chapter that Ritschl will not admit this. Yet it is, he grants, a *sine quâ non* of the life according to godliness.‡ This rapid provisional sketch may suffice to prepare us for the fuller investigation, to which we now proceed, of the notions involved in the Ritschlian conception of Christianity.

* *R. und V.*, iii., p. 83; *Unterricht*, p. 32.
† *Unterricht*, p. 33
‡ *R. und V.*, iii., p. 35; cf. pp. 500-4.

CHAPTER V

THE SPECIAL CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES; GOD AND HIS KINGDOM—THE PERSON AND "GODHEAD" OF CHRIST

The Doctrine of God—Rejection of Theoretic "Proofs"—God known only in Acts and Manifestations—"Religious" interpretation of Attributes—Idea of Eternity—Love the Fundamental Attribute—God as Spiritual Person—The "Fatherhood" of God—Ritschlian Restriction of this Notion—Deduction from Love of the Idea of the Kingdom of God—The World as a Means to this Kingdom—Ambiguities in Ritschlian Usage—Kingdom of God and Church.

The Person of Christ as Founder of the Kingdom—Christ's Person in light of His "Vocation"—The Kingly Office the Highest—The Meaning of "Godhead" of Christ—Christ the Revelation of God's Grace and Truth—Unity with God in His World-Purpose—His Supremacy over the World—Comparison with New Testament Representations—The Word made Flesh—The "Lord"—Christ's Pre-existence and Connection with Creation—Efficient and Final Cause—The Exalted Christ—Significance for us—Ritschl's Anti-mysticism.

THE character of a theology depends, fundamentally, on its idea of God. A number of points in the Ritschlian doctrine of God have necessarily been anticipated in the course of the preceding remarks; but we must now attempt a more detailed exposition, in connection with the leading doctrines of

the Kingdom of God, and of Christ, the Founder of that Kingdom.

It has already been shown that, while admitting a form of the moral proof of the existence of God, analogous to that of Kant, Ritschl, like Kant, refuses all cogency to the theoretic proofs. The ground on which he does this in his first edition is the general one that the idea of the world-whole which is employed in the cosmological and teleological proofs is itself a product of religion.* To derive from it the idea of God is therefore a case of reasoning in a circle. In his later editions he partially abandons this ground,† and subjects the proofs to more detailed criticism. The *cosmological* argument he rejects because it does not carry us beyond the idea of the world; the *teleological* (borrowed from Aristotle), because it yields only the idea of a final end of the world, and also does not take us beyond the world, only now teleologically conceived; the *ontological*, with Kant, because it is illegitimate to pass from idea to reality.‡ It may be remarked, however, that even in his rejection of these proofs—and his criticism of them is by no means invulnerable—Ritschl is not always consistent with himself. He never quite surrenders his earliest point of view, according to which a scientific proof of the existence of God is derived from the consideration that things and

* *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 185–6 (1st edit.).

† iii., p. 194 (3rd edit.). See above, p. 66.

‡ iii., pp. 17, 203–15; *T. und M.*, pp. 7–15. Schultz takes up a more positive attitude to these "proofs" in *Grund. d. Dogmatik*, pp. 26, 27.

thinking must have a common ground—a form of the ontological argument *; and in refuting Strauss he explicitly claims for the understanding the right to pass from laws in nature to the ordering will which they presuppose—a form of cosmological inference.†

It is a cardinal contention of Ritschl that the idea of God, whether originating as a postulate of the mind for its own ends, or as given in its perfect form in the Christian Revelation, is a purely *religious* idea, that is, contains no "metaphysical" elements, but admits of being stated in terms of religious value only. The introduction of such terms as "the Absolute" is the importation of a foreign and vitiating element into theology.‡ We have nothing to do with an essential nature in God, but only with His acts and manifestations; and even with these only as interpreted and reflected "in the corresponding self-activities in which the workings of God are appropriated by man."§ God is for us "the

* iii., p. 192 (1st edit.); p. 213 (3rd edit.); *Leben*, i., p. 233; ii. p. 23.

† iii., pp. 219–20, 224. "A law," he says, "or that constituted by law (*ein Gesetztes*), points back the understanding to an ordering (*setzenden*) mind and will."

‡ *T. und M.*, pp. 17–23, etc. Yet we find him availing himself of the idea of "Ascity" in God (*R. und V.*, iii., p. 443), and many of his own discussions are highly metaphysical. Kaftan, in article on "Glaube und Dogmatik" in *Zeitschrift*, 1891, declines to follow Ritschl in this rejection of the idea of "the Absolute," pp. 490–92; so Scheibe in *Die Bedeut. d. Werturteile*, p. 71. It lies in the meaning of the word "God," Kaftan thinks, that "God is the Absolute, the Unconditioned," only this is not a specifically Christian proposition.

§ *R. und V.*, iii., p. 33.

complex of all the divine modes of action,"* through which He becomes known to us. In like manner, a "non-metaphysical," that is, a "religious" interpretation is sought for the divine "attributes," which Ritschl will have us regard as derivative aspects of the single attribute of love, viewed by him as inclusive of the notion of a "world-end." For the efficient realisation of this end, God must be conceived of as the Creator and Preserver of the world, as being able to dispose of all things by His power, as having all wisdom to execute His purposes, etc. But these affirmations of religion are not to be translated into "theoretic" forms.† Omnipotence, for example, has nothing to do with the action of God as supreme causality in nature," ‡ or omnipresence with the idea of filling space without bounds. They are simply expressions of the confidence of faith that the help and care of God will never be wanting to the pious.§

* *Leben*, ii., p. 194. But this nominalism or phenomenalism is unthinkable, if we are to retain our hold on God as a real Being at all. Acts and manifestations have only meaning as expressions of a "nature" or character.

† Cf. Lotze, *Outlines of Phil. of Religion*, ch. iii.

‡ But see note on Personality below.

§ *Unterricht*, pp. 13, 14; *T. und M.*, p. 18. We are not, he says, to think of omnipotence as something behind love, but of God "as love, which has the attribute of omnipotence." But the omnipotence, surely, must be there as an essential determination of God's being, else love would not be able to wield it. The truth which Ritschl seeks to express is much better put by Martensen (*C. Dog.*, p. 99)—"All the divine attributes are combined in love, as in their centre and vital principle. Wisdom is its intelligence, might its productivity; the entire natural creation, and the entire revelation of righteousness in history, are means by which it attains its teleological aims."

So righteousness in God is divested of everything judicial and punitive,* and is explained as the "consistency" of God in carrying through His purposes of love for the individual and the world. In the New Testament it is indistinguishable from His "grace." † Ritschl tries hard to show that the ideas of "holiness" and "wrath" in the Old Testament have no connection with the divine "righteousness," and holds that the latter notion especially—that of wrath—has "no religious value for Christians." ‡ It has at best an eschatological reference, and there points to the annihilation of those who finally reject the divine will. § The fuller discussion of these notions belongs to the next chapter.

One attribute of God on which Ritschl bestows special attention is that of "Eternity," and his treatment of it may profitably be glanced at as an illustration of his methods. This attribute, we are again warned, is not to be thought of metaphysically as denoting existence without beginning or end. Its sense is simply that in all changes of events, or modifications of His own activity, God's purpose abides ever one and identical with itself; His plan remains the

* *R. und V.*, ii., pp. 104–6. The few (?) scriptural passages which speak of retributive justice are, Ritschl thinks, of post-exilian date, and betray a Pharisaic spirit, foreign to the general teaching of the Old Testament. Paul's declaration in Rom. ii. 5–8 is explained by saying that the Apostle is only speaking "dialectically" (p. 155). See Chap. VI. for fuller discussion.

† *R. und V.*, ii., p. 102; iii., p. 446; *Unterricht*, p. 13.

‡ *R. und V.*, ii., p. 154.

§ *Ibid.*

same; His will is unalterably directed upon the end for which the world exists. To establish this view, Ritschl enters on highly abstract discussions as to the relation of God to time, to which only an arbitrary definition of the term could lead us to deny the character of "metaphysical."* The nearest analogue to a right conception of eternity, he thinks, is the logical act of judgment, in which elements that in experience are successive are grasped into a unity of thought in which the time-form disappears. "Eternity in general," he says, "is the power of the spirit over time."† As regards the actual happening of events in the course of the world, the scheme of time, he grants, exists for God also; but through His perfect knowledge at every instant of His plan as a whole, and the constant direction of His will towards its realisation, He transcends the temporal mode of contemplation, sees the whole in every part, and is as sure of the realisation of His purpose at the beginning as at the end. From this point of view Ritschl explains the Scriptural representation of an election by God of the Christian community "before the foundation of the world"‡—a representation

* *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 223, 282-8. It will be observed that in these discussions Ritschl is not dealing with value-judgments, but with what God actually *is* in relation to time. The truth is, it is the "non-metaphysical" mind which thinks of eternity crudely as time without beginning and end; only by a "metaphysical" effort do we rise above this first view, and try to frame a juster conception—be it that of Ritschl, or another.

† P. 223.

‡ Eph. i. 4. Election, with Ritschl, is of the community as

which, though couched in temporal form, only expresses, he maintains, the logical subordination of means to end—the Kingdom of God in this case being the end, and the world the means to its realisation.*

The supreme and all-comprehensive determination of God in the Christian religion, however, is not power, or wisdom, or righteousness, but—"love." † "God is love." ‡ In this Johannine expression Ritschl sums up the whole Christian doctrine of God. The full contents of the notion of love are only unfolded when we pass to the doctrine of the Kingdom of God as the world-end; but two things are implied in it as respects God Himself fundamental to the Christian view, viz., God is spiritual Person, and He is Father. Love implies that God must be thought of as spiritual Personality. The Personality of God, accordingly, is a truth strenuously maintained by the Ritschlian theologians. Ritschl undertakes a lengthened defence of it against the objection raised by Strauss and others that Personality necessarily involves limitation, and contends, in harmony with Lotze, that perfect Personality, on the contrary, implies the *absence* of limitation. Here, again, his subtle and ingenious mind plunges into depths which it is

such, not of individual believers. The world is created for the sake of the Kingdom of God; the thought of the latter is therefore logically prior to that of the former.

* *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 284–7; *Unterricht*, p. 12.

† *R. und V.*, ii., pp. 96–102; iii., pp. 260 ff.

‡ 1 John iv. 8; *T. und M.*, p. 16. Cf. *R. und V.*, iii., p. 260: "The adequate notion of God is expressed in the notion of love."

hardly possible to describe as other than "metaphysical."* Personality, however, he holds, does not come into the Christian view on its own account, but solely as the form under which God is conceived as love.† Love alone furnishes the content of the Divine Personality; without this it would be an empty abstraction. The specific expression for this truth in the Christian Revelation is that God is "Father"—the God and Father of Jesus Christ, and the Father of the community of believers in fellowship with Him.‡ An interesting question here arises as to the sense which Ritschl gives to this term "Father," and the range he concedes to the Fatherly relation. He does not explicitly discuss the point, but, the idea

* *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 220–25. We quote a few sentences from this passage in further illustration of what we mean by "metaphysics" in Ritschl. He is showing that, so far from Personality involving limitation, only the Infinite can have perfect Personality. "As the Cause of all that is," he says, "God is only affected by the properties with which He endows His creatures, and which He perfectly cognises as the effects of His own proper will. Nothing which acts on the divine mind is originally strange to it, and it needs to appropriate nothing to itself in order to be independent. Everything which the world signifies is rather for God at bottom an expression of His own self-activity, and what reaction there is upon Him from the movement of things He knows as the circling course (*Kreislauf*) of that reality which is possible only through Him. Since He embraces all that is in the unity of His judgment and aim, He is eternal; and there is no interruption in His Being or consciousness conceivable, for no impression of things or ideas can come before Him which has not already been apprehended in the unity of His thought and purpose" (p. 224).

† iii., pp. 225, 260; *T. und M.*, p. 16.

‡ ii., p. 97; iii., pp. 259–60; *Unterricht*, pp. 1, 9.

of derivation of nature being excluded, it seems clear that Fatherhood is simply with him a synonym for God's will of love, as it rests first on Jesus, and then on His disciples united with Him.* The historical Jesus stands in so peculiar a relation of solidarity of will and purpose to God—in such moral homogeneity with God—His place in the plan of God is so central and unique—that the divine will of love terminates on Him with a special, unshared, and complete complacency. In the unity and intimacy of this relation, perfectly responded to in the loving trust and obedience of Jesus, is realised Fatherhood on the one hand, and Sonship on the other. A corollary of this view is that the relation of sonship does not belong to all men, but only to those who, as members of Christ's Kingdom, appropriate the standing there given them in Christ.† God is not, as in so many modern theories, the Father of men universally, but only of the Son, and of the members of His

* ii., p. 97 : "The name of God as Father, which Jesus also makes valid for the community of His disciples, since He recognises these on account of their union with Himself as sons of God, has in this general application no other content than the *creative will of love* which establishes the community of the perfect Revelation, and guides it to its goal, the Kingdom of God." Cf. iii., pp. 259–60 : "In the sketch of a moral world-order, theology can only take as its starting-point the notion of God in which the relation of God to His Son our Lord is expressed, and through His mediation is extended to His community. . . . God verifies Himself to the Son and the community as *the will of love*."

† "The love of God therefore directs itself upon the Son of God in the first instance, and only for His sake on the community, of which He is Lord."—iii., p. 441.

Kingdom.* They and they only have the right to claim God as Father, and to trust in Him as such. Thus, by a curious, yet perfectly logical result of his initial failure to recognise an original kinship between man and God in his theory of religion, Ritschl is led to the disavowal of one of the most characteristic tenets of the broader theology of the day. It is at the same time not easy to reconcile his restricted view of Fatherhood with his doctrine of God's universal will of love. Either the "will of love" extends beyond the area of the "Fatherhood"—which is hardly Ritschl's supposition—or the only objects of the love of God are the Son and His community; and the sinner cannot believe in the love of God to him outside of that circle. What then *is* the relation of God to him on this theory ere he believes? The theory leaves us in the dark. It need hardly be said that there is no place in the Ritschlian system for an eternal sonship of Christ, other than ideal, or for an essential Trinity of any kind. The Fatherhood of God has relation to the *historic* personality of Christ, and to the community of believers constituted through Him; while the "Spirit" of God is declared to be "the knowledge which God has of Himself and of His own end," and

* Cf. *Leben*, ii., p. 199 : "As Father, God is not in the first instance the Creator of the world, but the Father of Jesus Christ, and through His mediation the Father of believers as the children won to Him through Christ. . . . All men assuredly are not the children of God, but only the members of the community, who already through Christ are reconciled to God." This position goes back to Ritschl's earliest theological period. Cf. *Leben*, i., p. 233.

"Holy Spirit designates in the New Testament the Spirit of God, so far as He is the ground of the knowledge of God, and of the specific religious and moral life in the Christian community," for "the practical knowledge of God in the community dependent on God is identical with the knowledge which God has of Himself." *

Love being accepted as the fundamental determination in the Christian view of the character of God, Ritschl now proceeds in the boldest speculative fashion to deduce from this attribute the idea of the Kingdom of God, and of the divine world-end.† Hegelian could hardly venture a more daring *a priori* flight than that in which Ritschl here indulges. His aim is nothing less than, through this attribute of love, "to derive the world from God," and "solve the problem of the world." ‡ Only the briefest sketch can be given here of this remarkable deduction. It lies in the nature of love, first of all, we are told, that its objects must be homogeneous to the person loving. They must, therefore, be spiritual persons.§ *A priori* we could not decide whether the object of the love of God would be *one* such person or a *world* of spiritual

* *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 444 ; cf. 260. This view of the Spirit, again, goes back to Ritschl's earliest dogmatic sketch (1853). "The Spirit of God . . . in relation to God Himself is the knowledge which God has of His own end, in which the ends of Creation and Revelation are comprehended."—*Leben*, i., p. 232.

† iii., pp. 259–70.

‡ iii., pp. 260, 262, 268.

§ P. 263.

beings; but reflection on the actual constitution of the world (here there is a descent into the *a posteriori*, and an eking out of speculation by experience) shows us that the correlate to the love of God is a *multitude* of spirits bound in the unity of a *race.** Love involves a feeling of the worth of the beloved object, but is more properly expressed in terms of will. It is a steadfast direction of the will upon the furtherance of the ends of the loved one. Stated otherwise, it is the appropriation of the end of another as one's own self-end (*Selbstzweck*).† Applying this to God, we have to think of His love as will directed to an end which is at once the end of others and His own self-end. He adopts the end of the beings he creates as his own. Ritschl uses here a very noteworthy expression. "As will," he says, "God can only be thought of in His conscious relation to the end *which He Himself is.*" ‡ Love, it will be perceived, is translated first into a steadfast direction of the will to an end; § then God is positively identified with this end of His will. He exists for us *only* as the will which embraces and realises the world-end. Ritschl expresses this idea in other words when he says: "Nothing is to be thought of in God before He determined Himself as love. Either He is thought of *thus*, or He is not

* P. 265. Matter, Ritschl holds, is the principle of manifoldness (p. 575). This, surely, is not a "value-judgment."

† P. 264.

‡ P. 262.

§ Lipsius remarks on Ritschl's narrowing down of love to a will-relation, and on the exclusion of the side of feeling (*Gemüthseite*) from it.—*Die Ritschl'sche Theol.* (in *Jahrb. f. prot. Theol.*, 1888, p. 10).

thought at all."* What, then, is this self-end of God? It has already been shown that it must be found in a world of spiritual beings, which God conducts to its perfection. But the connection of this spiritual world (of humanity) with the world of nature suggests a necessary judgment on the origin of the latter. It implies that nature is no accidental appendage to the existence of the human race, but is created as a means to the accomplishment of the divine end† in humanity. "Even nature, therefore, is explained from the will of God determining itself as love . . . the total world, therefore, viewed as the condition of the moral Kingdom of created spirits, is the creation of God to this end."‡ A difficulty arises from the fact that, as involved in natural conditions, the human race may seem to lack that unity which fits it for being the object of the *one* divine will. This difficulty is solved in "the representation of the Christian community which has for its task the Kingdom of God."§ For "this idea of the moral union of the human race through action from the motive of universal love of one's neighbour represents a unity of many" which transcends all natural limitations of family, rank, and nationality—"a *super*natural unity, without the given manifold being thereby destroyed."‖ It is next shown that this union in a Kingdom of God, and activity in its service, are possible only on condition that the community acknowledges "the Son of God as its Lord, and is obedient to Him."¶ Thus the conclusion is reached—"If, accordingly, the creation and guidance of

* P. 268. † P. 265. ‡ Pp. 265-6.
§ P. 267. ‖ P. 267. Cf. *Unterricht*, p. 6. ¶ P. 267.

the world are to be apprehended as the means for the building up of created spiritual natures, viz. men, into a Kingdom of God in the community of Christ, then the religious view of the world in Christianity is the means to the solution of the world-problem generally, and the mark which this religion bears upon itself of a particular historical origin is no hindrance to its including within itself the universal destination of the human race."* In brief, the problem of the world is solved by showing how the world comes to exist as the means to a spiritual Kingdom of God, which, as world-end, is deduced from the thought of love.

The idea of the Kingdom of God which results from this deduction is that of a universal moral union of men of which the distinguishing mark is reciprocal action from the motive of love.† It will be felt that, notwithstanding Ritschl's continual insistence on this Kingdom as the "Selbstzweck" of God, and the highest good and aim of men, it still remains with him a somewhat abstract and "skeleton" notion; that to give it concrete significance, and the requisite

* P. 268. The patent difficulties in this view of Ritschl will be touched on later. While "love" is retained in name, God's being is really merged in His world-purpose, which exhausts it. He exists *only* for the world-end. His will is described as making its own the end of others; yet these others, as created spirits, have *their* end only as He prescribes and appoints it for them in their creation. Nor is there real choice on God's part in the matter. We are forbidden to think of God as anteceding or transcending this determination of His will, which simply *is*.

† iii., pp. 12, 13, 267, 270, etc.

clothing of flesh and blood, we require to go back on the complex of duties in ordinary Christian morality. * Grace, in short, much as Ritschl may dislike the idea, presupposes nature,—the second creation presupposes the first,—and man's relations, duties, and responsibilities, as springing from his rational and moral endowment, and his place and functions in society, must be taken into account if an adequate conception of God's "end" for him even in his Kingdom is to be framed. We cannot, therefore, separate the Kingdom of God as a religious idea from relation to this natural background, or afford to despise the help which a philosophical analysis of man's nature and powers, undertaken from a Christian standpoint, brings to the elucidation of the latter.

Waiving this for the present, we may suitably call attention to certain ambiguities which inhere in Ritschl's use of his formulas about the Kingdom of God, and tend to create an unclearness in his representations. It can hardly escape us, for instance, that, as denoting the "self-end" of God in the creation and government of the world, this expression "the Kingdom of God" is used by Ritschl sometimes in a narrower, sometimes in a wider sense. We saw before how Ritschl is wont to distinguish between the *religious* end of supremacy over the world, and the *moral* end of fulfilment of duty from the motive of love to one's neighbours. In strictness

* This is acknowledged, in fact, by Ritschl himself, though he does not seem to perceive that it necessarily brings him into the sphere of natural ethics from which he would divorce Christianity. Cf. iii., pp. 495, 576-8.

the Kingdom of God is connected specifically with the latter. It is, as we are told over and over, the name for that union of men for moral duty from the motive of love which is the self-end (*Selbstzweck*), and final end (*Endzweck*) of God in the creation of the world.* Its end is carefully distinguished from the religious end. When, however, as not infrequently happens, we find Ritschl speaking comprehensively of "the Kingdom of God" as "the highest good" for man, it is evident that we have a wider usage. The Kingdom is now viewed as the sphere which embraces *both* of these ends—the satisfaction of the religious no less than of the moral need. The blessedness of the "eternal life"—the religious function of ruling the world—is included in it as well as the moral end.† The double-standpoint is

* *E.g.*, the Kingdom of God is defined specifically as "the moral organisation of mankind through action from the motive of love," and it is pointed out that "if it were sought to define the peculiarity of Christianity merely by its teleological moment—the end of the moral Kingdom of God—its character as religion would be abridged."—iii., p. 13. So, in p. 270: "The Christian representation of the Kingdom of God, which is indicated as the correlate of the notion of God as love, designates the widest possible union, extensively and intensively, of mankind through the reciprocal moral action of its members, which transcends all natural and particular grounds of determination." The "ellipse" illustration (p. 13) depends on this distinction of the religious from the ethical end.

† Cf. *Unterricht*, p. 6. "The Kingdom of God is the highest good for those who are united in it, in so far as it affords the solution of the question raised or indicated in all religions,—how man, who knows himself as part of the world, and at the same time as capable of becoming a spiritual personality, can

dropped, and the Kingdom of God is made, as in the later usage of the school, the all-comprehending category of the Christian religion. The ambiguity goes even deeper, and affects the idea of the "highest good" itself. It is difficult to tell what in Ritschl's view *is* the supreme end for either God or man—whether the religious end of supremacy over the world ("eternal life"), or the ethical end in the Kingdom of God, specifically designated the "End-zweck" of creation. The Kingdom of God is spoken of as the "highest good" sometimes in the one respect, sometimes in the other.* If it be said that in the complete conception *both* are to be held as included, the difficulty recurs as to the relation in which they stand to each other—which is the higher, and which is subordinate to the other as means.† For there cannot well be two "highest" ends. It will

give effect to the claim hence arising to supremacy over the world, in face of the limitations of the same."—Cf. *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 30, 267, etc.

* *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 267-8, 481, etc. In p. 365 the Christian task is represented as "the attaining of the eternal life" (in Ritschlian sense); but, as frequently, the "highest good" is placed co-ordinately in the realisation of the moral end. Thus *Unterricht*, p. 3: "It is only thought as the highest good inasmuch as it is at the same time valid as the moral ideal to whose realisation the members of the community are bound among themselves through a definite reciprocal mode of action."

† In one place near the beginning we have the distinction that "freedom in God, the freedom of the children of God, is the self-end of each *individual*, even as the Kingdom of God is the *common* final end (*Endzweck*)" (p. 13). This, however, is never distinctly worked out, and, in any case, does not resolve the difficulty.

be found impossible, we believe, to reduce Ritschl's statements on these points to complete harmony.

Another source of ambiguity to which attention may be directed connects itself with the distinction drawn by Ritschl between "the Kingdom of God" and the "Church"—a distinction in itself of great importance, one, therefore, which he does well to emphasise. The ambiguity arises, not from the distinction of these two ideas, but from the vague use of the term "community" (*Gemeinde*) as applied to both. Ritschl's definition of the "Kingdom of God" we have just had before us. The "Church" he would define as the union of the members of this Kingdom for the public worship of God. The two magnitudes are the same as respects membership, but the point of contemplation in each case is different. In the Kingdom of God believers in Christ are regarded in so far as they, without distinction of sex, rank, or nationality, act reciprocally from love, in a universal fellowship of moral disposition and moral goods; in the Church the same persons are viewed as united in visible societies for the definite ends of religious service.* The usual distinction of a visible and invisible Church Ritschl rejects, replacing it by this of Church and Kingdom. As existing in a definite time and place, with a recognisable constituency, institutions, and government, the Church cannot be anything but visible; on the other hand, since the motive of love in a believer's

* *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 270-1; *Unterricht*, p. 7. It is not clear how, even on Ritschl's showing, Church and Kingdom are to be identified in membership, for many assuredly are in the visible Church who are not truly in the Kingdom.

heart is hidden, the Kingdom of God is an object of faith.* Ritschl directs attention to the fact that, while the Kingdom of God is the ruling idea of Jesus, the Apostles were led by practical interests to place in the foreground the idea of the Church—the significance of the Kingdom being by them transferred to the future. † To designate *both* of these unions—or aspects of the one union—Ritschl uses the term "community," and hence the difficulty that frequently arises in determining his meaning. In strictness, one would say it is the Church that is the "community," for in what sense, we may ask, apart from their fellowship in the Church, do the members of the Kingdom constitute a "community" on earth? No other form of organisation exists which binds them together. Ritschl, however, treats the Kingdom of God as a "community" equally with the Church, and so lands us in ambiguity. When, for example, he speaks of the theologian as reckoning himself in the "community," of the "community" as the object of the divine justification, of the New

* P. 271. With this may be compared the views in Ritschl's earlier Essay on "The Idea of the Visible and Invisible Church," reprinted in *Gesammelte Aufsätze* (1893). The distinction there drawn is between the Church in its empirical historical existence (*Sein*), and in its aspect of moral growth and development (*Werden*). In strictness it is faith alone which can apprehend it as *the Church* even in its visible capacity. The Church has its empirical and visible, but likewise its ideal and invisible side, and the predicate "invisible" belongs to it through a "determination of worth" proceeding from faith—the organ by which we apprehend "things not seen.'

† P. 270.

Testament Scriptures as reflecting the faith of the primitive "community," etc., one is at a loss to know *which* "community" he means—Kingdom or Church. Would Ritschl recognise any identification with the former which was not effected through the latter? And can he get rid of the necessity of distinguishing between real faith and mere ecclesiastical connection? Would he attribute justification, *e.g.*, to all members of the visible "community" without distinguishing between real membership in the Kingdom, and mere nominal profession? If not, the distinction between "visible" and "invisible"—call the latter "Kingdom" if he will, though the Kingdom also has its visible side—seems somehow indispensable.

Leaving aside other aspects which might be named under which the Kingdom of God is viewed in the Ritschlian system,* we hasten to look at the connection sought to be established between this Kingdom and Christ, its Founder, as throwing light upon the Ritschlian estimate of Christ's Person. It need not be explained, after what has been already advanced, that Ritschl and his school reject entirely the ordinary Church doctrine of the Person of Christ, with its ontological Trinity, its incarnation of the Eternal Son, and its union of the two natures—the divine and the human—in Jesus. This is denounced as metaphysical,

* Such questions are discussed by Ritschl, *e.g.*, as how dependence on God is reconcilable with human freedom. This is solved by the consideration that the adoption of God's end as our own *is* the highest freedom.—*R. und V.*, iii., pp. 277–9,

scholastic, valueless for religious purposes,* an obstacle rather than a help to faith. If "Godhead" is to be affirmed of Christ—and the Ritschlians are zealous in affirming it—it must be, not as a scientific proposition, but as a "judgment of value."† It is specially insisted on that the estimate of Christ's Person cannot be dissociated from the consideration of His total work.‡ The highest point of view from which to regard Christ is that of His *Vocation* (*Beruf*) as Founder of the Kingdom of God, and the bringer-in of the perfect spiritual religion. The difficulty recurs at this point which has just met us in the doctrine of the Kingdom of saying what *is* the supreme end in the vocation of Jesus. Along one line of representation it is the attainment of *religious* supremacy over the world—Christ being regarded as the perfect type (*Urbild*) of this religious destination of the members of His Kingdom.§ Accord-

* Pp. 368, 376, 378. "The historical and religious view of Christ finds not the slightest place in the scheme of the two-nature doctrine."

† "The judgment does not belong to the domain of uninterested scientific knowledge, like the Chalcedonian formula . . . All acts of knowledge of a religious kind are direct judgments of value" (p. 376). "The thought is always only the expression of the peculiar recognition and esteem which the community gives to the Founder" (p. 378; cf. pp. 389, 439). Of course, no one would claim that Christ can be rightly judged of by an uninterested mind.

‡ "The theological solution of the problem of the Godhead of Christ will therefore have to be grounded in an analysis of the work of Christ for the salvation of mankind in the form of His community" (p. 393; cf. 417, 421, etc.).

§ "This religious destination of the members of the community (viz., the maintenance of the personal self-end in lordship

ing to another, it is the realisation of the *ethical* end of God in His Kingdom, to which religious freedom must then be regarded as subsidiary.* In carrying through his conception of vocation, Ritschl, it may be observed, does not disdain the Church formula of the three "offices" of Christ, but gives it an interpretation suited to his own system. The kingly office he takes to be the highest, reading into it the idea of a superiority to the world displayed in obedience, patience, and voluntary surrender to death; and subordinates to this the prophetic and priestly offices, the former as denoting Christ's revealing activity, the latter His action in maintaining His own standing of nearness to God, and in bringing others near.†

The question of central importance regarding Christ must always be—In what sense do we attribute to Him "Godhead," or "Deity"? and the Ritschlian answer to that question must now more closely engage our attention. The "metaphysical"

over the world) is now exhibited beforehand in the Person of the Founder," in whom, therefore, we see "the type (*Urbild*) of this destination of man" (p. 366).

* "The Kingdom of God, whose realisation forms the vocation of Christ, signifies not merely the correlate of the self-end of God, but also that goal which constitutes the highest destination of mankind" (p. 426; cf. p. 423). There cannot plainly be two "highest" destinations; one must be means, the other end. A common representation is that Christ realised freedom over the world *through* His devotion to the end of the Kingdom (pp. 366, 424, etc.). This would make the *ethical* vocation the means.

† Pp. 394, 405, 407, 446, etc. Cf. *Leben*, ii., pp. 209–10, and see next chapter.

doctrine of the Incarnation is rejected: what has the Ritschlian theology to give us in its place? In the study of Christ in the light of His vocation, we are brought, Ritschl will tell us, to the recognition of such features as the following, which form the ground of the attribution to Him of this high religious predicate:—

1. He is, to begin with, the perfect "Revelation" of God to men—the Revelation, above all, of "grace and truth," the specifically divine attributes. The mind, will, purpose of God are manifest in Him. Knowing Him, we know the Father. So inseparably are the knowledge of Christ and the knowledge of God related, that without the one we cannot have the other. In this respect Christ has to us "the religious value" of God.*

2. Christ stands, moreover, in a relation of perfect "solidarity" of will and purpose to God.† He had the knowledge of God's "self-end" in the creation and government of the world, viz., the Kingdom of God; He knew His own calling to realise that end; He perfectly identified Himself in will with God's end in founding His kingdom, and lived and died in

* iii., pp. 367, 382, 428, etc. Cf. on the whole subject *Unterricht*, pp. 19–23.

† "The task of Jesus Christ in His vocation, or the final aim of His life, viz., the Kingdom of God, is directly the final aim of God in the world, and is known by Him (Jesus) to be such. The solidaric unity with God which Jesus, in accordance with this, asserted of Himself (John x. 28–30, 38; xiv. 10; xvii. 17–23) has respect to the whole circumference of His work in His vocation."—*Unterricht*, p. 20; cf. *R. und V.*, p. 428, etc.

undeviating obedience to His great vocation.'* This is not, as in the older doctrine, a union of "natures." It is, Ritschl holds, something infinitely more real and vital—a union of the divine and human in the sphere of *will*.

3. Further, in the exercise of His vocation, He manifests a perfect "supremacy" over the world, patiently enduring its evils, and voluntarily submitting to death as the means of securing a greater ultimate victory.† It is in this sense of inward superiority to the world, not in that of any transcendental delegated authority, that all things are delivered to Him of the Father, and all power is given to Him in heaven and in earth.‡ His life was a continual exercise of sovereignty. Thus also He shares in a prerogative of Deity, for sovereignty over the world is a special attribute of God.§

These three significations of Christ's "Godhead" may be reduced to two. Christ is the perfect Revelation of God in His grace and truth and in His world-purpose, and He exercises unlimited sovereignty over the world. As Ritschl himself sums it up—"In the predicate of His Godhead are united the two indispensable significations of Christ as the perfect Revealer of God, and as the revealed Archetype (*Urbild*) of the spiritual domination (*Beherrschung*)

* *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 421, 423–4, 425, etc.; *Unterricht*, pp. 19, 20. This includes His special "equipment" for His vocation, and His "sinlessness" in fulfilment of it.

† Pp. 426, 434, 454; *Unterricht*, pp. 21, 24.

‡ Pp. 429, 435.

§ P. 444.

of the world"; * or, again—"According to the indications in the New Testament, the elements in the historical appearance of Christ which are comprehended in the attribute of His Godhead are grace and truth in the fulfilment (*Durchführung*) of His life-calling, and the elevation of His spiritual self-determination above the particular and natural motives which the world offers." † *How* Christ came to be thus extraordinarily constituted and endowed, is, as we formerly saw, a mystery with which theology is not permitted to occupy itself.‡

To the objection naturally taken to this representation that it places the attribute of Godhead "merely in the will, and not in the nature, of Christ," and so leaves Him still "mere man" §—which assuredly is the case—Ritschl replies with a fine scorn. "If the objectors," he says, "are really the religious people, and the well-informed persons in religion they profess

* P. 367.

† P. 436; cf. p. 383.

‡ We grant, of course, that these attributes manifest Christ's Godhead; are even the side of His Godhead which is turned to us on earth, and from which we rise, as John did (ch. i. 14) to the apprehension of His essential dignity. But the value of this admission is destroyed if this last step is refused us, and the attributes are sought to be retained while the essential dignity which alone explains them is denied. The "mystery" which hinders the affirmation is not allowed by the Ritschlians to bar the way to the negation.

§ *R. und V.*, iii., p. 439; cf. 375. "From this it is deduced further," he says, "that in this way the Godhead of Christ is still not recognised, but rather is denied." The reproach comes from critics of *all* schools—Lipsius, Pfleiderer, etc., as well as the orthodox.

to be, let them prove it by showing that they know how to distinguish religious and scientific knowledge." * Everywhere else, he argues, one judges that it is in the form of will the nature is known. He forgets to add that it is precisely the drawback of his theology that it will not allow us to go back from the will to the nature. It results from the above view that the marks of Christ's Godhead are to be sought only in the frame of his earthly life. † "The same acts," says Ritschl, "through which Jesus Christ approves Himself as man, in the same relation and time are thought of as proper predicates of God, and as the peculiar means of His Revelation through Christ." ‡ We have still to ask how this historical positivism is made by Ritschl to harmonise with the New Testament teaching on Christ's pre-existence, exaltation, and activity by His Spirit in the Church.

There are, Ritschl says, two types of presentation of Christ's Godhead in the New Testament. One is that of the Apostle John, with his formula of "the

* iii., p. 439.

† P. 383; cf. 1st edit., p. 351. "The Godhead of Christ must be apprehended in the definite traits of His historical life as an attribute of His temporal existence."

‡ *Unterricht*, p. 22. The fundamental thoughts in the above view are already found in Ritschl's earliest sketches of Dogmatics, particularly the idea of the realisation of the divine "Selbstzweck" and "Weltzweck" in Christ, and the stress laid on will. "The substance of God and of man is the will."—*Leben*, i., p. 241; cf. pp. 232, 282, etc. Lipsius says with justice that, apart from this point of "Godhead"—*titulus sine re*—Ritschl only repeats thoughts which were familiar in modern theology before him.—*Die Ritsch. Theologie* (in *Jahr. d. Prot. Theol.*, 1888, p. 10).

Word became flesh";* the other that of the rest of the Apostles, who attach themselves to the confession of Christ as Lord (κύριος). † The sense of the Johannine expression is taken to be that "the word, which is the general form of divine Revelation, has in Him become a human Person. . . . The proposition has the sense that the divine Revelation-word constitutes the form, the human individuality the material, of the Person of Christ" ‡—in other words, Christ is the embodiment of the divine Revelation. In both types, though from distinct points of view, we have the recognition of Christ's pre-existence, and declarations of His connection with creation. In the Pauline Epistles the latter thought is brought out very prominently. All things, it is emphatically affirmed, are created by Christ. "He is before all things, and in Him all things consist." § Ritschl's exegesis is easily equal to the task of disposing of these statements. The Pauline expressions, he contends, have nothing to do with temporal priority. This would be a "cold" thought. ‖ The subject in the respective texts is, he holds, the historical Christ, regarded as at the same time the image and Revelation of God, and the end of the creation. The passages are then explained on the principle that what is last in execution is first in intention.¶ Efficient cause is changed into the idea of final cause—a somewhat

* *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 382, 412, 428.
† Pp. 378–9.
‡ Pp. 382, 412.
§ Col. i. 14–20; cf. 1 Cor. viii. 6; Eph iii. 9, etc.
‖ P. 380.
¶ P. 381.

Aristotelian and "metaphysical" procedure.* The Johannine intimations of pre-existence are strangely not discussed,† but it is made clear, generally, that the only sense in which the Son has eternal pre-existence is as the object of the knowledge and will of God.‡ This is supported by the reflection, in harmony with Ritschl's view of eternity, that as we cannot think of any interval between willing and execution in God, "Christ exists eternally for God as He is manifest to us in temporal limitation." §

What, then, of the *future* of Christ's existence in His state of exaltation? Is it also ideal? Ritschl does not say this, but, on the other hand, assumes that Christ now exists in some perfect or glorified state of which we have no definite knowledge. ‖ But he is equally emphatic in the assertion that Christ's life in this glorified state is for us completely "hidden," ¶ and that to give it any religious worth we must translate it into terms which make it practically convertible with the posthumous influence of his historical Personality. The state of exaltation of Christ, in other words, is for us as good as if it were not, and

* "As the end to which all is directed, He is before all" (p. 380).

† In the *first* edition, Ritschl remarks on the passage in John, "Before Abraham was, I am" (ch. viii. 58), that it is "probably not quite comprehensible," being spoken "to close a discussion, not to state a doctrine" (p. 357). This is afterwards omitted.

‡ Pp. 441, 443.

§ P. 443.

‖ *Unterricht*, p. 21.

¶ *R. und V.*, iii., p. 407.

what takes its place is the perpetuation of Christ's image and influence in the Scriptures and the Church. This is affirmed with a decision which is intended to shut the door against all "mystical" talk of a direct communion of the soul with the Saviour. "All that falls into the state of exaltation," it is declared, "must be represented as the continued action of the corresponding parts of the state of humiliation, if it is to have any clear meaning. . . . The work of Christ in the state of exaltation must be represented as the permanent effect of His historical appearance."* On any other supposition, it is contended, "the formula of the exaltation of Christ to the right hand of God is for us either without content, since Christ, as exalted, is directly hidden from us, or becomes the occasion of all possible fanaticism."† More definitely: "The continuance of the Christian community in its specific character is grounded on the fact that the remembrance of the completed life-work of Christ remains present in it, and that, in accordance therewith, the personal impulse of the Founder continues unceasingly to work in all the like strivings of the members of His community. These relations form the revealed side of the mystery of the exaltation of Christ to the right hand of God, which is recognised by His community as the pledge that His life has not failed in His death, but is perfected."‡ In the same sense must be interpreted Christ's present rule or lordship over His Church. It comes, then, to this, that so far as religion

* Pp. 407-8.

† Pp. 383-4, 407.

‡ *Unterricht*, p. 23. Schleiermacher's view is similar

is directly concerned with Christ, it has to do only with His historical manifestation. To seek a more immediate relation, or direct communion, with the exalted Christ is, in Ritschl's eyes, "mysticism" and "fanaticism" (*Schwärmerei*)—something to be abhorred almost as the plague!

CHAPTER VI

THE SPECIAL CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES CONTINUED; SIN AND REDEMPTION—JUSTIFICATION AND RECONCILIATION—THE NEW LIFE

Variations of Ritschl—Postulates of Ordinary Doctrine of Sin —Ritschl's Earlier and Later Views—Denial of Retributive Justice—Standard of Sin in Idea of Kingdom of God—Sin as Ignorance—Denial of Original Sin—Guilt and its Punishment—Sin and Death—Satisfaction-Theory of Atonement rejected—Christ as Revealer of God's Grace—The Connection of Forgiveness with Christ's Death—Doctrine of Sacrifice in Old and New Testament.

Ritschlian View of Justification, Adoption, and Reconciliation—Justification and Good Works —Contradictions in Ritschl's View—Religion and Ethics—The Objective in Justification translated finally into the Subjective (Regeneration, etc.)—Christ as Priest—Representation and Imputation —The "Community" the Direct Object of Justification —Does Faith precede or follow Justification?—The Christian Life—Its Religious Side; Faith in Providence, etc. —Its Ethical Side ; Action from Love in God's Kingdom —Lack of Eschatology—Excluded by the Principles of the System.

UNDERLYING a right conception of redemption is an adequate estimate of *sin*, and this connects itself, again, with just views of the character and moral administration of God. The ordinary theology has a clear and coherent doctrine on this subject.

Sin, in its view, is not simply moral transgression—deviation from, or falling below, the standard of duty, or ideal of right, accepted by the individual conscience—but involves essentially a Godward relation,* and has respect to absolute law. This necessitates as its counterpart the view of God as the Source and Upholder of moral law, Himself the ethically Good One, whose commanding will is the expression of His essential holiness, and whose administration is unchangeably directed to the maintenance of the good and the punishment of evil—the latter partly as a means to the recovery of the wrong-doer, but primarily as a reaction of His essential righteousness against that which infringes the moral order of the universe. Sin, in this view, is not that which must be, or ought to be, but is a violation of the normal relation subsisting between God and His moral creatures; the rupture of an original bond between the soul and God; an evil which has entered through the culpable misuse of human freedom, and which entails on the race that has admitted it a heritage of depravity and woe. Corresponding with this conception of sin is the idea of *guilt*, as not merely the feeling of self-blame at conscious deviation from a standard of the mind's own; but as having relation likewise to absolute law, and expressing the sense of accountability to God and of liability to the just effects of His displeasure. It is already evident, however, that this customary view of sin must undergo profound modification on the principles of the

* "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight" (Ps. li. 4).

Ritschlian system. Hardly any of its presuppositions are such as Ritschl could unreservedly accept. He knows of no such original bond between the soul and God as this theory assumes; the idea of an ethical nature in God as the ground and source of moral law is foreign to his teaching; * he rejects absolutely the punitive aspect of the divine character, save in a problematical eschatological contingency,† and there are numerous other contrasts. We ask, therefore, with some interest, what conceptions he substitutes for the conceptions he discards, and what place the notions of sin and guilt retain in his theology?

We previously remarked that it is difficult to reconcile Ritschl's positions on sin and guilt, even in the short interval between the first and later volumes of his chief work. In his first (Historical) volume he seems to accept almost without qualification the Kantian doctrine of the morally-legislative reason, and conformably with this takes up, as we saw, strong ground on the objective reality of guilt—not simply a guilt-*consciousness*—and on the desert of punishment.‡ A different note is struck in the lecture on

* Cf. *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 234–8, 269. In the former passage Ritschl criticises the view that the law of God is "the expression of the Divine will, which for God Himself is essential" (p. 234). The assumption of an inherent righteousness in God is (see below, p. 142) "bad metaphysics," for "God is real only in form of will" (p. 237).

† See below, p. 140. It was formerly shown that righteousness in God, with Ritschl, is simply His consistency in carrying out the ends of His love.

‡ See passages quoted in Chap. II.: *R. und V.*, i., pp. 387-9, 394, 396, 464, etc. (E. T.).

"Conscience" in 1876, where conscience, so far as its origin admits of explanation, seems traced empirically to education in society.* In the second and third volumes of his principal work the modification is very apparent. The doctrine of a government of the world by reward and punishment is explicitly rejected †—more sharply even in the second and third editions than in the first ‡—and declared to be entirely alien to the spirit of Christianity. Paul's use of this mode of representation in Rom. ii. is explained as merely "dialectic." § The error is held to have originated in a mistaken way of conceiving of the Divine government after the analogy of earthly states, whereas its true type is the family. ‖ It is a "Hellenic" and "rational" notion—a piece of "natural religion"—though it is allowed, somewhat inconsistently, that it is found also in the Old and New Testaments, which *ex hypothesi* are untouched by Hellenic influences; and it is described more broadly as "attaching itself to the representation of a reciprocal relation of right between man and God which arises among the Hellenes, Romans, and Israelites (not *only* Hellenic, therefore) from the fact

* Reprinted in *Ges. Aufsätze*, 2nd series. See p. 183, and cf. *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 247, 249, etc.

† *R. und V.*, ii., pp. 4, 41, 47–9, 247, 257, 343, etc.

‡ The leading passages are recast and strengthened in the 2nd and 3rd editions, and special prominence is given to the supposed "Hellenic" origin of the notion. Cf. with passages mentioned in last note the corresponding sections, pp. 4, 223, 318, etc., of 1st edition.

§ ii., p. 320.

‖ iii., p. 92.

that with these peoples the state is valued even in a religious sense as the highest good." * On these grounds the idea of retribution is to be excluded altogether from Christianity.† In consonance with this contention, the doctrine of Divine wrath is, as before stated, struck out of the Christian system as of "no religious value" ‡—save in the problematical case of the finally obdurate, for whom the fate reserved is annihilation.§ Even this is an inconsistency, for such a judgment would be an act of punitive severity for which no corresponding ground is conceded by Ritschl in the character of God. ‖

We have now to inquire, positively, what the conceptions are which Ritschl substitutes for those which he discards in his doctrine of sin. We must not be misled by the fact that (especially in his later editions) ¶ Ritschl lays stress also on the God-ward

* iii., p. 343. In the 1st edition the explanation given is —"In every religion it is usual to consider certain (*gewisser*) evils as divine punishments. . . . This view arises originally from the direct comparison of definite actions, of which one knows himself guilty, with definite evils, which are regarded as the retribution of God."—P. 318.

† P. 343.

‡ ii., p. 154 ; iii., p. 307.

§ ii., pp. 129, 140–42. But the case is hypothetical. "Whether there are such persons, and who they are, lies within the scope neither of our practical judgment, nor of our theoretical knowledge."—iii., p. 363 ; cf. p. 307.

‖ Cf. a careful examination of Ritschl's doctrine in Dorner, *System of Doctrine*, iv., pp. 66 ff. (E. T.).

¶ Cf. *Leben*, ii., p. 201. As in the 1st edition the Kingdom of God is looked on from the moral rather than the religious point of view, so in the doctrine of sin it is its aspect of

relation in sin—speaks of it, *e.g.*, as indifference or mistrust towards God,* describes God as the Author and Representative of the moral law,† affirms the reality of guilt,‡ and finds a (subjective) justification for the notion of Divine punishments§; for we shall immediately see that these expressions have a widely different meaning, and stand in a totally different connection of thought, from that which belongs to them in the ordinary view. The new connection of ideas may be thus exhibited.

As elsewhere, Ritschl takes his starting-point in his doctrine of sin from the idea of the Kingdom of God. It is this, not the idea of the "law" of God, which is determinative of the notion of sin in the Christian system. Sin, as Ritschl justly says, is no end or good in itself; its notion only arises in comparison with the idea of the good of which it is the contradiction. But this idea of the good is summed up comprehensively in the Christian religion in the idea of the Kingdom of God, viewed as prescribing to its members their highest moral task. Sin, therefore, can first be perfectly understood as the opposite of this

contravention of moral law, rather than its Godward side, which comes into prominence. This is supplemented in 2nd and 3rd editions, where a good deal is re-cast in expression.

* *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 315-17, 335, 363, etc.

† P. 56 (retained from 1st edition, to the standpoint of which it is more appropriate): cf. p. 337.

‡ "The removal of the guilt-consciousness must be so understood as to include the removal of the real guilt" (*i.e.*, in his sense, the actual separation from God).—P. 55 ff., p. 52. In another sense guilt is not removed. See below, p. 150.

§ P. 337.

highest moral good.* It is not denied that the notion of sin is found outside of Christianity, but it is only in Christianity it is adequately expressed, since here other ideas of God, of the highest good, of the moral destination of man, of redemption, prevail than are found in other religions.† The idea of the moral law is not prior to the idea of the good—*i.e.*, to the idea of the Kingdom of God—but is rather a deduction from it. The Kingdom of God describes the final end which God aims at realising through men in the world; the moral law represents the system of ends which are the necessary means to the attainment of this final end.‡ "The end of the Kingdom of God is that final end (*Endzweck*) from which the moral law springs."§ In place, therefore, of the moral law as regulative of the idea of sin, we have the teleological conception of the Kingdom of God. || The doctrine of an essential

* Pp. 312, 317, 331. Cf. p. 55; "The religious-moral aim of the kingdom of God forms the standard for the apprehension of sin and guilt."

† P. 311. We, of course, grant unreservedly that the *perfect* notion of sin only arises in connection with the complete Revelation of God's will and purpose in the gospel. But Ritschl, as seen below, goes much further.

‡ P. 56.

§ P. 421; cf. 495. Whence, then, we ask, the admitted ideas of sin in other religions, where there is not the knowledge of this end? What of the work of the law written in the hearts of the Gentiles, of which the Apostle speaks (Rom. ii. 15)?

|| We get some light on Ritschl's point of view from his discussion (pp. 236, 269) of the old problem whether a thing is good because God wills it, or whether He wills it because it is good. Ritschl declares both views false. There is nothing prior to God's will, and it lies in the nature of will that it must be

righteousness of God of which the moral law is the expression he rejects as "bad metaphysics." *

The idea of the Kingdom of God, then, is the standard of judgment on sin; but since this idea has only been fully brought to light through the Revelation of Christ, and an "inborn" law of duty is not to be assumed, it is obvious that such sin as existed in the world prior to Christ's appearance, or exists now, where He is not at all, or only imperfectly, known, must be regarded as practically sin done in "ignorance," and hardly sin at all. This, accordingly, is how Ritschl views it, and how he supposes it to be judged of by God.† It is because it is sin done in

directed to a definite end. God's will, therefore, cannot be thought of apart from the end to which it is directed, that is, the Kingdom of God. God's will, as love, *subsists in* its direction to this end. This yields the standard of right and wrong. Deceit, *e.g.*, is wrong, not because it conflicts with any independent moral rule, but because it stands in contradiction with this "self-end" of God—the Kingdom of God (p. 269). But can it be seriously held that what Ritschl elsewhere calls "the rule of truth for God" (p. 58) has no inherent justification, but depends for its validity on this reference to a "self-end"? The failure of Ritschl's attempt to derive all moral principles from the notion of God's "self-end" will be commented on later. It should be evident that the goodness of this end depends rather on its realisation of all those principles of right which are expressed in the moral law, and is not that which constitutes these principles good.

* Pp. 234–37, 241, etc. "Since it follows as a settled result of the assumption of the Personality of God that God is real only in the form of will, it is bad metaphysics to ascribe to Him righteousness as a latent (*ruhende*) attribute, which belongs to Him apart from the form of will" (p. 237).

† Pp. 357–63.

ignorance that, on his theory, it is pardonable.* He rejects the idea of an original state of innocence,† and accounts for the origin of sin by the fact that man starts off as a natural being, the subject of self-seeking desires, while his will for good is a "growing" quantity.‡ An *a priori* necessity of sinning cannot, indeed, be established; § nevertheless, "sin is an apparently unavoidable product of the human will under the given conditions of its development, and is yet, in the consciousness of our freedom and independence, imputed by us to ourselves as guilt." ‖ Ignorance, therefore, is, as the experience of children teaches us, a weighty factor in the origin and development of sin; ¶ and the distinction between sins committed in ignorance, and a final definitive rejection of the good, furnishes us with the standard of Divine judgment.** So far as men are supposed to be salvable at all—even those whom, with the Apostle, we might regard as thoroughly hardened ††—their sins, Ritschl declares, must be assumed to be brought by God under the

* P. 360; ii., p. 247.

† Pp. 313–14, etc.

‡ *Unterricht*, p. 26.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 26; *R. und V.*, iii., 358. This saves the possibility of Christ's sinlessness.

‖ P. 360.

¶ P. 357.

** P. 358. In the 1st edition Ritschl wrote: "Sin is judged of by God not as the definitive design of contradicting the known will of God, but as the *relative* stage of ignorance" (iii., p. 338). In the later editions the word "relative" is suppressed, and we read simply "but as ignorance," p. 363. This is important, in view of the remarks in *Leben*, ii. p. 200.

†† Eph. iv. 17–19.

category of sins of ignorance.* If cases of definitive obduracy occur, it has been already remarked that they are supposed to be dealt with by annihilation.†

With equal decision, we have next to observe, Ritschl rejects from his theology the conception of "original" or "inherited" sin, which, he thinks, would, if true, destroy responsibility, and make education impossible.‡ A doctrine of original sin is, in fact, incompatible with his theory of knowledge, which allows no subsistence to the soul other than that which it has in its activities. Sin, in his view, not only originates in will, but consists only in acts of will. Children are not born with any bias to sin, and the acknowledged universality of sin in the race is to be accounted for as the result of ignorance, of the natural desire for unlimited freedom, of education, example, and perverted social influences. Yet the sinful act, he teaches, does not cease with itself. It reacts upon the will which produces it, and creates a sinful propensity, in the end a habit, from which

* P. 359. Pfleiderer ingeniously points out that Ritschl himself is an "intellectualist" in his view of sin. "It is noteworthy," he says, "that Ritschl in his theory of sin plants himself quite upon the ground of the Greek intellectualism, elsewhere so sharply judged by him."—*Die Rit. Theol.*, p. 68.

† ii., pp. 140–2 ; iii., p. 359. In the latter passage, however, the language is more general.

‡ Pp. 126, 319–20, 323, etc. It should be observed that while making it a reproach to the doctrine of original sin that it ignores the *gradation* of sin, Ritschl himself has only two *classes* of sin—sins of ignorance, which are pardonable, and the sin of definitive resistance to the will of God. Cf. Dorner's criticism in *Syst. of Doct.*, iv., p. 66 (E. T.).

further sins proceed. It thus develops into evil character.* But socially, also, it does not end with itself. The relations of individuals in society,—their reciprocal actions, their example and influence, the unseen ramifications of their deeds,—bind them in indissoluble connection, and give rise to what, in contrast with the Kingdom of God, may be called "a kingdom of sin," † in the common guilt of which all in some measure participate.‡

With the doctrine of sin in Ritschl coheres, in the next place, his doctrine of *guilt*, which, again, is not to be understood in the sense of the ordinary theology as obligation to punishment,§ but it is to be conceived of, first, as a guilt-*consciousness*—the sense of dissatisfaction and self-blame which accompanies nonfulfilment or violation of duty ‖; and second, as real

* Pp. 319-20, 331, etc. Ritschl is undoubtedly right in laying stress on this tendency of sin to produce a sinful propensity (*Hang*), and develop into evil character. But such propensity is as inconsistent with his theory of knowledge, and necessitates as much a permanent basis of the soul, as the doctrine of an *inherited* bias. If sin consists not only of acts, but of permanent dispositions, there is no *a priori* reason why these should not be inherited.

† P. 320.

‡ In this way Ritschl supposes himself able to uphold the sacramental character of infant baptism (p. 321). But children do not yet share this "common" guilt—which cannot be distinguished from the personal guilt which each contracts through yielding to the evil influences around him—and on Ritschl's theory have no sin, either actual or common, to wash away; therefore need no regeneration. Infant baptism is as great a stumbling-block to Ritschl as it was to Pelagius.

§ Pp. 40, 48, 50.

‖ P. 56.

separation from God, and hindrance to fellowship with Him—the result of the distrust or indifference which the bad consciousness occasions.* It is this experience of separation from God which, on Ritschl's showing, is the real core or essence of the punishment of sin, so far as, *ex concessis*, the punitive idea (which rests on the rejected theory of "rights") is to be admitted into Christianity at all.† Physical evils, on the other hand, have no necessary relation to sin, and wear the aspect of punishment only through the guilt-consciousness so reckoning them.‡ The same evils, from another point of view, would be regarded as helps to freedom, or as fatherly chastisements, and disciplines of love.§ Underlying this representation of evils as punishments there is, however, the truth resulting from the fact that the world is constituted by God for His own end—the Kingdom of God—viz., that an opposed relation to this end necessarily involves men in conflict with the divine order, and entails on them evils.‖ As it is put elsewhere, for the mechanical relation between character and reward (good or evil) there is substituted the organic relation of ground and consequence—of seed and fruit.¶ This suffices, in Ritschl's view, to explain the use made of

* Pp. 41, 52, 56, 83, 316–17 ; *Unterricht*, p. 30.

† Pp. 41, 49, 345, etc. "Since I here provisionally, dialectically, allow the correctness of this whole theological view to stand," etc. (p. 49). The "dialectic" character of much of Ritschl's reasoning on this subject needs to be kept in mind.

‡ Pp. 53, 333–35, 337, 346, etc.

§ Pp. 43, 333–4, etc.

‖ P. 337.

¶ *Unterricht*, p. 16.

the representation of reward and punishment in the New Testament—the thought, *e.g.*, of a Last Judgment.* What is not admitted is that there is any exercise of a properly punitive will of God. This teaching, applied by Ritschl to physical evils generally, has a special bearing on the Scripture doctrine of death as the penalty of sin.† It is admitted by Ritschl that Paul teaches this doctrine; no little pains, indeed, is spent in the analysis of the Pauline argument; but the conclusion reached is that this thought of the Apostle is no theological rule for us.‡ "It is no necessary element of the Christian view of the world"; § is, in short, to be rejected. The weakness of Ritschl's position on this whole subject is that, while professing to found on Scripture, and be guided by it, he is in constant conflict with its plainest declarations. The retributive aspect of the divine government is one ingrained so deeply in the general teaching of Jesus and His Apostles that it might seem impossible for any candid reader of the New Testa-

* *Unterricht*, p. 17. "The scheme of retribution in the Last Judgment (Rom. ii. 6–12; 2 Cor. v. 10, etc.) is superseded by the analogy of seed and harvest (Gal. vi. 7, 8)." Ritschl does not seem to recognise that justice may be truly punitive though embodied in the natural order, or wrought out through natural laws.

† *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 46, 339, etc.

‡ P. 341.

§ *Ibid.* Yet Ritschl in one place specifically distinguishes the death of Christ from that of other men in this, "that Jesus knows Himself to be excepted from the fate of death, and thinks of His dying only as a voluntary act of surrender of His life to God."—ii., p. 83. What, if death is the general doom, is the meaning of this?

ment to ignore it.* We are warned, indeed, against making individual suffering the measure of individual sin,† but that a general connection exists between natural and moral evil, and that God frequently makes use of physical evils as the instruments of His judgments,‡—that, in any case, sin will not be allowed to go unpunished—are truths "writ large" on Scripture from its first page to its last.

The doctrine of sin, as above expounded, defines the general limits of the Ritschlian doctrine of Redemption, to the exposition of which, with its results, we now proceed. It is easy to see, from the principles laid down, the broad lines on which this doctrine of redemption must be constructed. It need not be said that Ritschl rejects absolutely the ordinary satisfaction-theory of the death of Christ. There are no premises in his system from which such a theory—or any modification of it—could be deduced. There is no principle in the character of God demanding the punishment of sin for its own sake; no wrath of God against sin; no objective condemnation resting on the race—the Pauline *κατάκριμα*—from which, as a first step in his salvation, the sinner needs deliverance. The sole obstacle to his reconciliation with God lies in his own guilt-consciousness, and in the distrust of God which this engenders. For the removal of this there

* Cf. Bertrand, *Une nouvelle Conception*, etc., pp. 282–92.

† Luke xiii. 1-5; John ix. 3. But Jesus denounces woes upon the Pharisees, predicts the judgments of God on Jerusalem, warns of the unquenchable fire of Gehenna, etc.

‡ So in the Old Testament prophets continually. Cf., *e.g.*, Isa. iii. 10, 11; Amos iv.

is needed no such atonement for sins as the ordinary theory supposes, but only the full Revelation of the Fatherly love and forgiving grace of God—a Revelation now given us by Christ in His life and death of obedience to the Father's will.* Even forgiveness of sins, in this connection, does not, so far as appears from the theory, imply that there is any displeasure at sin on God's side which requires to be set aside, or that any change takes place whatever in God's dispositions or relations to the sinner; it does not even mean that guilt, so far as it denotes real demerit, is removed, for this, Ritschl informs us, cannot take place †; it only conveys the assurance that, in fellowship with Christ, sinners have access to God, and are received into communion with Him, without their sin, or consciousness of guilt, forming any hindrance thereto. This, in the Ritschlian way of stating things, is Justification.‡

But what now, on this hypothesis, of the connection uniformly declared in Scripture to exist between

* Speaking of the woman who was a sinner, Ritschl says—"Because Jesus represents in His Person the grace of God, as also the normal fellowship of man with God, He removes in her the hindrance to her fellowship with God through her sins in the degree in which the impression of His personality has overcome the natural distrust and frivolity of the sinful woman."—*R. und V.*, iii., p. 507.

† P. 58. "The removal (*Aufhebung*) of guilt and of guilt-consciousness would be in contradiction to the validity of the rule of truth for God, as also for the conscience of the sinner" (p. 513). "The Gospel of forgiveness of sins does not remove the feeling of guilt for past sins, but only the effect of this in separation from God, or the distrust of God inhering in it."

‡ See passages below.

forgiveness of sins and the sufferings and death of Christ? The fact of this connection Ritschl freely admits. We do not exhaust the significance of Christ for our redemption, he grants, when we view Him merely as Revealer. "Rather does He Himself, first of all, and after Him the oldest witnesses, connect that consequence with the fact of His death." * Christ Himself, he allows, attributes a sacrificial and saving virtue to His death, and all the writers of the New Testament, with the exception of James and Jude, do the same.† But this is not to be understood in the sense that Christ made satisfaction for men by enduring in their stead the penalty of sin, or that His death has any relation to "expiation" or "propitiation" in the ordinary sense. Sin, as we have seen, is not a thing that requires to be punitively dealt with, or to have atonement made for it. The translation of

* *R. und V.*, ii., pp. 41, 185. Ritschl vindicates the genuineness of Christ's utterances on the saving virtue of His death against Baur, and has lengthened exegetical discussions on the significance of the vicarious sufferings of the servant of Jehovah in Isa. liii., and on the meaning of Mark x. 45 ("The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto," etc.). The reference to the "sin-offering" in Isa. liii. 10 he arbitrarily pronounces a corruption of the text (p. 64); and Christ's use of the term "ransom" in Mark, he explains to mean that "His guiltless death serves to shield the members of His community from experiencing in death complete annihilation and frustration of the end of existence" (*die volle Vernichtung und Zwecklosigkeit*)! (p. 87). This which can only refer to subjective apprehensions, is elucidated by the theory of sacrifice below. Ritschl also holds (a curious point of contact with the advocates of a limited atonement) that Christ represents His death as in room of "many," not "all" (p. 85)

† *Unterricht*, p. 36.

the Hebrew word *Kipper* (to cover) in the sense of "to propitiate" (ἱλάσκεσθαι, German *sühnen*) is a mistake.* All that is needed, as already shown, is that the sinner's distrust in God should be removed, his confidence re-established, and his will brought to appropriate God's end. Christ's death, in Ritschl's view, was fitted in a special way to produce this result. It was the culmination of His lifelong obedience, the supreme proof of His fidelity to His Father in the fulfilment of His vocation, and the ultimate guarantee of the reality of that new relation to God which is exhibited in His Person.† This is all practically. If it is asked, how, then, should His death be spoken of as a propitiation, a sacrifice? Ritschl answers by a theory of his own as to the meaning of the Old Testament sacrifices.‡ Sacrifice, he claims, had nothing to do with the removal of guilt.§ It was a *gift*, brought by or for those who

* ii., pp. 187, 200–3.

† *Unterricht*, pp. 36, 37, 38; *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 422, 511–13, 524, 574, etc. "Christ's death," we are told, "in the view of the Apostles, is the compendious expression for the fact that Christ has inwardly maintained His religious unity with God, and this Revelation-position in the whole course of His life" (p. 511). His redemption "was accomplished through the demonstration (*Bewährung*) of His fidelity in His vocation and His blessed fellowship with God in suffering even unto death" (p. 10). So the connection of justification with the work of Christ is said to be conditioned "by the positive determination of the worth of the sufferings of Christ as occasion of His patience, and proof of His fidelity in His vocation, and of the steadfastness of His faith" (p. 524).

‡ He refers to H. Schultz and Baudissin in support of his views.

§ It is "not a covering of sin before the face of God"

already stood within the bond of the covenant, and had for its end to mediate fellowship with God.* It sheltered, not from the consequences of sin, but from the majesty of God, in accordance with the old Hebrew idea that to see the face of God meant destruction.† Its ground is not the sinfulness of man, but the distance between man as weak, perishable creature—"flesh"—and the Almighty. It is a later point of view if Isaiah connects this fear of God with the sense of sin.‡ The essence of the sacrificial ordinance, therefore, was to disarm fear, and enable the creature to draw near to God.§ In like manner, Christ is our sacrifice because through the influence of His death in dispelling distrust and awakening

(ii., pp. 199, 200), but covers the "person" (pp. 188, 200). Assuredly, but it is the person as *sinful*, and his sins as well. This, however, Ritschl denies. "The protective covering of the offerers from the face of God includes in general no reference to the sins of the same, but has respect only to the fact that they are perishable men" (p. 204).

* Pp. 202–4. Ritschl lays stress on the fact that the sacrifices were intended for persons already *within* the covenant of God's grace, and that no sacrifices availed for those who sinned "presumptuously" (pp. 185, 199). This can hardly be affirmed of the sacrifice by which the covenant itself was formed, to which he says Christ's death is specially likened (p. 168). It cannot be doubted, in any case, that Christ's sacrifice is represented as the means by which sinners formerly alien are reconciled to God, and brought into His covenant. The sinning "with a high hand" has its analogue also under the Gospel (Heb. x. 26).

† This is Ritschl's interpretation of the Old Testament idea of divine "Holiness."

‡ Pp. 202-3; cf. Isa. vi. 5.

§ Pp. 195, 204, etc.

confidence, we are enabled to draw near to God. Ritschl finds the key to its meaning in that saying of Peter: "Christ also hath once suffered for sins . . . that He might bring us to God."* In the voluntary offering up of Himself, Christ is at the same time our Priest, and Ritschl lays stress on the idea that He was a Priest for Himself, in maintaining His own nearness to God, before He could be a Priest for others. It will generally be felt, we believe, that however the connection of the death of Christ with human salvation is to be explained, this sacrificial theory of Ritschl's is a lame and inconsequential attempt at interpretation.† Ritschl himself allows that it is the feeling of guilt which most of all keeps the sinner back from God,‡ yet he will not concede that the Old Testament sacrifices had any relation to guilt, or were in any sense a "covering" of it.§ It is, however, impossible to read the passages bearing on this subject without perceiving that certain

* P. 214; *Unterricht*, p. 39; cf. 1 Peter iii. 18.

† This is conceded by Häring, and some others of the school, who seek to give a more positive aspect to the theory of redemption. See next chapter.

‡ This surely must have acted in Old Testament times as well, and we have many evidences that it did so. How, then, should fellowship be maintained if no provision be made for the removal of this guilt-consciousness? It is to be observed, also, that Isa. vi. 5, in which this feeling is allowed to appear, is, on Ritschl's theory, earlier than the Levitical code of sacrifice.

§ Even on Ritschl's own principles, no reason can be given for the interruption of the fellowship, and the provocation of wrath, in the members of the community, but the sins for the sake of which the sacrifices were offered.

of the sacrifices at least—to some extent probably all—stood in relation to sin, and were a means of averting its punitive consequences. "The priest shall make atonement for the sin that he hath committed, and it shall be forgiven him."* This, at all events, is most clearly the view taken of the sacrifices by the New Testament writers. It is only by a *tour de force* of exegesis that Ritschl can evade their testimony, or explain them in a sense suitable to his theory.†

In now advancing to look more particularly at the effects of this redeeming work of Christ in Justification and Reconciliation, we come to the very kernel of Ritschl's dogmatic system. The doctrine of justification is, as we saw, that part of his system to the elucidation of which his labour is primarily directed;

* Lev. iv. 35, and *passim*. Cf. 1 Sam. iii. 14: "The iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice and offering for ever." For Ritschl's attempt to explain away this phraseology, see *R. und V.*, ii., pp. 196-7.

† Thus he evades Paul's statement, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law," etc. (Gal. iii. 13), by the extraordinary interpretation that, in Paul's view, the law in question was not the law of God, but a law of angels (p. 249); the passages in John on Christ's propitiation (1 John ii. 2; iv. 10) he gets over by saying that we cannot precisely determine the meaning of the texts (p. 213); the writer to the Hebrews, who speaks of Christ making propitiation for the sins of the people (ii. 17), was a Jew unskilled in Hebrew, and mistakes the meaning of the formula he uses (pp. 213–14), etc. The Septuagint translators are involved in the same condemnation of misunderstanding Hebrew usage in translating ἱλάσκεσθαι, etc. But as Pfleiderer and others have remarked, the error is quite as likely to lie with the Doctor of Göttingen.

yet, owing to the manifold shiftings of his point of view, it is, perhaps, the most difficult of all to reduce to coherence. Ritschl, in his own estimation, is a thorough-going, indeed the only consistent, upholder of the Protestant doctrine of Justification by Faith alone—justification, *i.e.*, not by good works, or, as Pietism would have it, by germinal holiness,* but wholly of God's free grace—the result of what Ritschl calls a "synthetic" judgment of God.† Thus far good; but when we inquire, What, then, *is* justification? the answer we get is not so clear. It is not in strictness the annulling of guilt;‡ still less is it the lifting off from the sinner of any judicial condemnation resting on him, or the pronouncing of him righteous in the eyes of the law. It as little moves in this circle of forensic notions, as it is to be understood in the Catholic sense of making the sinner inwardly righteous by infusion of grace.§ It is simply, as already explained, the act of God in

* *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 82, 104. This theory, however, that God imputes to the believer the fruition of the holiness which he sees in germ in his will is held by more than Pietists (was, *e.g.*, Kant's), and is not wholly avoided by Ritschl himself when he comes to speak of God as imputing to us our "fellowship" with Christ.

† Pp. 78, 500. This means that God does not "analytically" declare the sinner righteous by first, as in the Catholic doctrine, making him so; but that by a "creative" act of will he gives him the relation of fellowship to himself despite his personal sinfulness. "The synthetic judgment," as he explains, "is thought of as the ground of the changed relation of sinners to God through an act of the will of God, without the content of the moral change coming into view" (p. 78).

‡ See above, p. 150.

§ *R. und V.*, iii., pp. 35, 78, etc.

graciously receiving the sinner into fellowship with Himself—giving him access to himself—notwithstanding the sin and guilt that still cleave to him.* It is not the annulling of the guilt, but the removal of the relation of estrangement which guilt creates.† The sinner, that is, notwithstanding the sin and guilt of his past life, or still cleaving to him, is delivered from his fears, and has trust in God awakened in him. Since, however, the instrumentality which effects this change is the view of God in the Gospel as the God and Father of Jesus Christ, into whose fellowship we are taken up, it follows that the consciousness of Justification is inseparable from the consciousness of Adoption, or acceptance into the relation of sonship to God—that, in fact, justification and adoption are but different aspects of the same thing.‡ The three expressions—forgiveness of sins,

* "Justification or reconciliation is the will of God as Father to admit sinners, notwithstanding their sins and their consciousness of guilt, to that fellowship with Himself which includes the right of sonship and eternal life" (p. 115; cf. *Unterricht*, p. 32). "When God forgives or pardons sin, He gives effect to His will that the contradiction in which sinners stand to Him, expressed in guilt, shall not hinder the fellowship of men with Him" (pp. 61–2). "Justification signifies the leading back of the sinner into nearness with God; the removal of the separation from God resulting from the existing contradiction to God, and the accompanying guilt-consciousness" (p. 96).

† Forgiveness of sins "is to be defined as the removal of the separation which, in consequence of sin, has entered between God and man" (p. 52).

‡ Pp. 90–4, 132, etc. Adoption, indeed, better expresses the new relation than justification, for "the attribute of father stands in relation to the peculiar duties and rights of the

justification, and adoption—are practically synonymous.* And this new relation has for its result Reconciliation—the appropriation by the sinner of God's end as his own—unity of will with God.† Yet—and here comes in the confusing element formerly adverted to—justification is not allowed to have any direct relation to this ethical end of Christianity, life in the service of the Kingdom of God.‡ It has direct relation only to the religious end, so-called, of freedom over the world, and is no more than the "presupposition," or *sine quâ non*, of the other or ethical end.§

Ritschl's view on this critical point on the aim (*Abzweckung*) of justification is not only gravely challengeable in itself—for why, we are compelled to

fellowship of the family. For this reason all investigations on the position of God with respect to the forgiveness of sins hitherto derived from the analogy of the head of a State, of the legal and relatively moral fellowship of the members of a nation, appear incongruent with the Christian idea of God" (p. 92). This is really to do what Ritschl should have done at first: give up the whole scheme of justification as unsuitable to the presuppositions of his theology. In consistency he should apply the same reasoning to the idea of the "Kingdom of God." For the formula of king and subjects is equally unsuitable to the scheme of the family

* *Unterricht*, p. 32.

† Pp. 76, 77. It will be seen by comparison with the first of the passages in the note on justification on last page how Ritschl sometimes equates reconciliation with justification, again more narrowly distinguishes it as the "effect" of the latter in the removal of the "active enmity" to God. See remarks below.

‡ P. 503. "Although justification or forgiveness of sins has no direct bearing in its aim (*Abzweckung*) on the calling forth of good works," etc.

§ Pp. 35, 196, etc.

ask, should justification, though not of works, yet not be directed to the production of good works, or of holy living as its end? why should it not be, as the ordinary view supposes, and Scripture seems to teach, *in order to* sanctification?*—but in its further working out gets, as we shall see, into hopeless conflict with itself. Justification, we have just been taught, has to do directly with the religious, and not with the ethical end of Christianity. Its direct aim is "eternal life,"† *i.e.*, in the Ritschlian sense, superiority to the world wrought by faith in God, and in itself has no bearing on the production of holiness or good works.‡ This is not simply an eccentricity of theory in Ritschl, but is a necessary result of the original separation of religion and morality in his system. Religion, in the Ritschlian view, has one origin; morality has another and independent one. The two lie apart in their root, and can only afterwards be mechanically combined. A *together with* is all he can ever find for them even in the nature of

* One would be disposed to say that in strictness justification on Ritschl's system has neither end in view, but aims directly at the restoration of trust and fellowship with God, which are the *sine quâ non* of both freedom from the world and good works.

† Pp. 94, 465, etc.

‡ "Under no circumstances can the positive proof for the necessity of forgiveness of sins be derived from its reference to the end of sanctification or good works, which doubtless comes into consideration in the Catholic doctrine of *making* righteous (*Gerechtmachung*) as the end of the same, but never in the Evangelical doctrine of *declaring* righteous (*Gerechtsprechung*)."—P. 465. Cf. Frank's criticism of this position of Ritschl in his *Die kirchliche Bedeutung*, etc., pp. 21–3

God; much more in the experience of man, and the system of the world. But then there are other elements in the Ritschlian view which make it impossible to rest in this dualism, and the remarkable spectacle is accordingly witnessed of the system working itself round till it reaches, to all appearance, a standpoint precisely the opposite of that with which it set out. In this new point of view the moral end is brought into the closest connection with justification; is taken up into it, and viewed as its goal; while the consciousness or assurance of justification is made so dependent on good works that we seem almost brought back to the Catholic doctrine.

In the form of the system just presented, religion has no necessary relation to morality. The supreme end is the "eternal life." Good works are rejected as even concomitant causes (*Nebenursachen*) of the latter.* A direct bearing of justification on the ethical end is denied. Yet this representation we are asked to combine with the supremely ethical view of God given in the religion of Jesus, and with the idea of the Kingdom of God as the "Selbstzweck" and "Endzweck" of God in the creation of the world. How is this synthesis to be accomplished? One way in which Ritschl seeks to bring it about is by recognising an "organic" relation between the religious end of freedom, and the moral life, regarded as the sphere in which the spiritual freedom is exercised, conserved, and strengthened.† Even this does not

* Pp. 478-9.

† P. 488. Ritschl quotes Bernard's words, *non causa regnandi, sed via regnandi*.

solve the difficulty of how morality should appear as the "Endzweck" of God in the world, and yet be a means to another end than itself—the supreme end of religious "freedom." Besides, what is this spiritual freedom on which Ritschl so much insists, when emptied of all ethical purpose and content? Of what worth is it, or to what uses is it to be put? How can there be a freedom sustained by trust in God, whose character is love, and whose world-end is ethical, which yet is *per se* indifferent to ethical ends? Or is it conceivable that a Being of such a character should receive sinners to Himself in the act called justification without respect to the moral end He means them to fulfil? How, it might even be asked, should justification be necessary for the restoration of religious communion, if the relation between religion and morality were not more intimate than Ritschl supposes? For justification, even in Ritschl's view, has to do with sin and guilt, *i.e.* with transgressions of the moral law; and why should these form any bar to *religious* communion, if religion and ethics were not one in root? The very suggestion of an "organic" relation (for which, however, no just ground is laid in the principles of the system) involves a change to a different point of view; and by stress of such considerations—almost, one would think, without perceiving the strange contrariety in which he involves himself—Ritschl is forced back upon a series of statements which, as already hinted, are nearly the reverse of his original position.

In this new aspect of the subject, it is not justification, but reconciliation, *i.e.* the removal of the

sinner's active hostility to God, and resultant unity of will and end with God,* which is the ruling notion. The two notions are now, indeed, declared to be "synonymous"†—only that reconciliation is the wider notion, the equivalent of justification with inclusion of its consequence.‡ The indispensableness of connecting justification with the moral end is brought out with the strongest emphasis.§ It is declared to be the ethical end of the Kingdom of God which called forth in Jesus the knowledge of redemption, and decision as to its manner, and redemption is related to this final end as means.‖ Faith, again, which is the condition of justification, is represented as including "a direction of the will to God as its highest end,"¶ and as involving the acceptance of the divine self-end as its own.** It thus falls under the

* P. 76; *Unterricht*, p. 33.

† P. 76.

‡ Pp. 76, 83, 97. Cf. pp. 186, 567, in which the "synonymity" is extended to include regeneration. See below.

§ "If the declaring sinners just is not to allow their destination to an active righteousness to appear superfluous," etc. (p. 75). "If the removal of guilt (justification) must be thought of only as an act of God determining the relation of sinners, and not as the effecting of a reciprocal agreement, then no satisfactory ground is shown for a religion with a moral aim (*Abzweckung*). . . The removal of guilt, thought of as a real consequence, includes in itself a change in the guilt-consciousness of such a nature that in it the contradiction of the will against God wrought in sin is no more active" (p. 77).

‖ Pp. 9, 10.

¶ Pp. 97, 100, 102.

** P. 481.—"A man believes in God or trusts in Him completely, in so far as he recognises in the realisation of His

category of obedience,* and Roman Catholic theologians are even justified in saying that love to God constitutes its essence.† Good works are therefore necessary as the consequences and proofs of faith,‡ and it is in the exercise of the functions of the spiritual life—trust in providence, patience in suffering, etc.—and in these alone that the believer attains to the certainty of his justification.§ It is questionable, however, whether, on Ritschl's view, certainty on justification is attainable at all. Ritschl agrees with Möhler in expressing a disgust at people who trouble others with questions about the certainty of their salvation, or, even indirectly, seem quite sure about their own. ‖

Kingdom his own most proper (*eigensten*) end." Granting, then, that it is not this aspect of faith, but its aspect of trust in God, which is directly involved in justification how can it still be maintained that the latter has no direct relation to moral action as its end?

* P. 97.

† P. 102.

‡ P. 481.

§ P. 167.—"Outside of these functions," he says, "is no place for certainty of justification by faith."

‖ P. 145. Strangest of all in this connection is the position of Ritschl that faith is not to be looked for at all till mature years. "Faith in Christ can be expected first in mature age;" "the effects of the grace of God in moral training and action" are earlier than faith in Christ; "from the exercise of humility and trust towards parents and teachers will proceed the right feeling of guilt towards Christ, and the trust in Him, in the riper period of life."—*R. und V.*, iii., pp. 565, ff. This is again very nearly the old Catholic position, represented, *e.g.*, in Clement of Alexandria, according to which moral training precedes the full entrance on the Christian life.

There is yet, however, another step needed to be taken by Ritschl to complete the circle. We saw earlier that it is a cardinal principle of the Ritschlian theology that all the saving acts of God—justification included—are known to us only on their *subjective* side as expressed in the spiritual functions they call forth.* These functions *are*, in truth, the facts for us. Ritschl's last step, therefore, is to translate justification and the related acts of God into their corresponding self-activities in man, in which alone they subsist, and are really known to us. Justification, on this showing, is known only in the changed spiritual relation of the sinner to God—in what is elsewhere called his reconciliation—in his altered will, his exercise of trust and obedience, his love to God and man, his patience in suffering, etc.—in other words, in the activities of the new life. Thus we come round, finally, to the view that not only are forgiveness of sins, justification, and adoption (which express something objective), as formerly declared, "synonymous" with reconciliation (the subjective effect), but all, again, are, in the individual experience, equivalent to regeneration (*Neuzeugung*), the new birth (*Wiedergeburt*), the making righteous

* Pp. 33-4. We "learn to know the acts of God, justification, the new birth, the communication of the Holy Spirit, the granting of the blessedness of the highest good, by the analysis of the corresponding self-activities in which the workings of God are appropriated by men . . . in their mirroring in the subject. . . . Outside the self-activity in which we appropriate the workings of God and realise them for our salvation, we have no understanding of the objective dogmas as religious truths." See Chap. ii.

(*Justum efficere*). "Therefore," Ritschl says expressly, "regeneration, or less exactly, the new birth, can, as predicate of the individual believer, in point of fact not be distinguished from justification, or reconciliation, or adoption. . . In this sense Melanchthon treats *justificare, regenerare*, and *justum efficere* as equivalent in signification," etc.* The result of this blurring of all distinct notions can easily be anticipated. The objective is, as said, translated into the subjective, and a view barely distinguishable from that of Catholicism is the result.† The "new birth" has, indeed, in any case, for Ritschl no further signification than is already given in the other terms, specially in adoption, which is explicitly equated with justification, as this with reconciliation, etc.‡ The *origin* of the new life "is and remains a mystery," on which nothing can be said.§

We are not, however, by any means yet finished with the Ritschlian doctrine of Justification. In the

* Pp. 566-7.

† Cf. Bertrand, *Une nouvelle Conception*, etc., pp. 137, 412-13.

‡ Pp. 566-7.—"Under the presupposition that God accepts us as His children, since He reconciles us with Himself through Christ, reconciliation (*Versöhnung*) is equivalent to adoption, and the possession of justification or reconciliation equivalent to sonship to God (*Gotteskindschaft*). If now the image of generation (*Erzeugung*) is applied to the founding of the latter (sonship) by the gracious judgment of God, it results that adoption, which is equivalent to reconciliation, can be designated as a regeneration (*Neuzeugung*) by God," etc. Cf. pp. 90, ff.; on justification as equivalent to adoption, pp. 159, etc.

§ P. 573 (note).

ordinary Church system, the acceptance of sinners by God in justification is mediated by an imputation of the righteousness or merits of Christ, and it is characteristic of Ritschl that he seeks to relate himself to this thought also. The ordinary view, of course, he rejects; but he thinks that the formula is capable of a suitable sense on other presuppositions.* He avails Himself here, like Schleiermacher,† of the category of representation. As it was the function of the priest of old to represent the people before God, "so," thinks Ritschl, "is Christ, as Priest, the representative of the community which, in the perfect obedience of His own personal life, He brings to God."‡ In the first edition, he put the matter generally thus: "God imputes to the members of the community of Christ their fellowship with Christ as the condition under which He admits them to fellowship with Himself,"§ and used illustrations drawn from intercession (Moses, David) to show how a probability arises that a person admitted to the fellowship of a good man is worthy also to be admitted to the fellowship of a third person he has injured.‖ If this roundabout explanation is to be taken strictly it points to some worthiness in the believer himself as the ultimate ground of his acceptance—a supposition which Ritschl

* Pp. 68, 159.

† Cf. his *Der christ. Glaube*, ii., p. 133.

‡ P. 515.

§ P. 482 (1st edit.). The whole discussion is considerably altered in later editions. Cf. in 3rd edit. pp. 64–70; 515–16. Cf. *Leben*, ii., p. 219.

‖ P. 58 (1st edit.). Cf. J. Weiss, in *Die Nachfolge Christi*, p. 124.

elsewhere energetically rejects. These compromising illustrations are, however, dropped in later editions, and the formula is amended to read that "God imputes to the community belonging to Christ the position (*Stellung*) in relation to the love of God in which He maintained Himself through His obedience."* There would be force in the use of the term "impute" (*anrechnen*) in this connection, if it were argued that in any sense Christ's obedience formed the ground on which the new position was given†; but little more seems intended, or can well be intended on Ritschl's principles,‡ than that the position which Christ sustains to God is that into which believers are now, in point of fact, admitted. He is the representative, or "Urbild," of that new relation of sonship to God into which, despite of their sins, believers are received.§ If Ritschl, notwithstanding, uses phrases which, strictly interpreted, would appear to imply more, they

* P. 516 (3rd edit.); cf. p. 69.

† Ritschl carefully confines himself (in later editions) to speaking of the imputation of Christ's "position" (*Stellung*) to believers, not—or only indirectly—of the righteousness that grounds it. But why "impute," when the standing is actually *given*?

‡ Ritschl rejects the idea that God needs, as it were, to supplement the moral imperfection of those whom He wishes to admit to His fellowship by the righteousness of Christ (p. 68).

§ Thus, p. 514.—"The admission of the members of the Christian community to fellowship with God, notwithstanding their sins and feeling of guilt, which is expressed in the forgiveness of sins, has its typical (*vorbildlichen*) standard and historical ground in the fellowship of Christ with God, which He maintained unbroken in the whole course of His life, viz., in His willingness to suffer for the sake of His vocation, and in His patience, exercised even unto death."

must be regarded as forms of "value-judgment," or modes of representation to which too literal a meaning cannot be attached. Either this, or something of the real nature of "imputation," must be admitted.* The kernel of his thought would seem to be that from the motive of love to Christ God shows favour, or is friendly, to those in fellowship with Christ.† But this involves a conditioning and limiting of love strangely at variance with his general theory that "God is love," and nothing else. It suggests the questions—Has God, then, no love to the sinner for his own sake?‡ And what is His attitude to those

* What short of this, *e.g.*, is implied in such sentences as the following in his main exposition?—"The worth which one has as an object of love is imputed to those who themselves lack this worth, but belong to Him who is the primary object of love. The position of Christ to God is imputed to His disciples, since God for Christ's sake accepts them into His effective love. But the position of Christ to God depends on His righteousness. Indirectly, therefore, the righteousness of Christ is imputed to His disciples, in order that they may be taken up into the love of God, as Christ is rooted in the same. . . . It amounts to this, that the position to God which Christ enjoys through His exercise of righteousness is imputed to those who belong to Him by faith as His disciples, in order that they may be taken up effectively into the love of God" (p. 69). Either this is an accommodation of language to Pauline phraseology, or it means that the new position given to believers is grounded on the imputation to them of a worth which they do not themselves possess, and would not be given to them apart from such imputation. It is difficult to distinguish this from the doctrine of the imputation of merit as a ground of acceptance against which the principles of the Ritschlian theology are a protest.

† P. 69.

‡ Cf. John iii. 16; Rom. v. 6–8, etc.

not yet in fellowship with Christ? Whence, in short, the *necessity* of this mediation? Ritschl's theology affords no answer.

The question just raised of the relation of the believer to Christ in justification connects itself with another in regard to which it is even more difficult to make clear Ritschl's precise position. Our remarks have hitherto gone on the supposition that the object of forgiveness of sins, justification, adoption, reconciliation—or however we may phrase it—is the *individual.* But this is by no means the opinion of our author. Not, in his judgment, the individual, but the Christ-founded "community"—by which in this connection can only be meant the Church—is the direct object of God's justifying act,* and the individual is entitled to share in the blessings of forgiveness and adoption only as he reckons himself in the community, and appropriates the promises made to *it.* There is, as Ritschl's critics have pointed out, a species of realism here curiously inconsistent with his usual nominalistic way of thinking.† The paradox, however, is one on which he is never weary of insisting.‡ It is not simply, what every one would

* Ritschl announces this discovery to Diestel in a letter in 1867, three years before the publication of his first volume.—*Leben,* ii., pp. 47–8. "As certainly," he says, "is the reconciliation, or justification, or founding of the community prior to the justification of the individual, or rather to his consciousness of justification, as the community is presupposed in the sacrifice of the covenant," etc. (p. 47).

† Cf. Bertrand, *Une nouvelle Conception,* etc., p. 422.

‡ *E.g., R. und V.,* iii., pp. 107, 132, 545–6. "Justification," he says, "or reconciliation . . . relates in the first instance to

admit to be true, that the society is logically prior to the individual, who is born into it as his environment, enters into its heritage, and is dependent on it in innumerable ways for instruction, stimulus, and help; that, in particular, the Church is the spiritual home and ordinary medium of salvation for the souls which by its ministries and fellowship it seeks to bring to Christ, and to build up in faith and goodness,*—but Ritschl conceives of the "community" as somehow an entity by itself, on which, in its ideal or collective capacity, justification is conferred, and the individual partakes of the benefit, not immediately, but as member of the body.† Jesus, so far

the whole of the religious community founded by Christ, which maintains the Gospel of the grace of God as the primary means of its continuance, and to individuals under the condition that they enrol themselves in this community through faith in the Gospel" (p. 132).

* Luther says somewhere—"The Church is full of the forgiveness of sins." This expresses the truth of which Ritschl's idea is the exaggeration.

† Ritschl indeed explains, replying to criticism, that he does not oppose the community to individuals, but regards the individuals as suitably defined in the community, "for the community consists in its members" (ii., p. 161). Precisely; but the bulk of his argument is meaningless unless justification is thought to apply to the community in some other way than it applies to the individuals. It is the community as such which with him is the *immediate* object of justification, and the members, as they enter, partake of this advantage. The community is not viewed as made up of the individually justified members. Ritschl has some strange feats of exegesis to make Paul agree with his ideas on this point. In Rom. ii. 26 he actually takes the expression "him who believeth in Jesus," "in the sense of the category, *i.e.*, collectively for the community of believers" (ii., p. 218).

as we can interpret his thought, is viewed primarily as the founder of a community, and it is to this community, regarded ideally as standing in the relation of faith to Himself, that the promises of the Gospel are given. We might illustrate by the analogy of a corporation or guild on which important privileges are bestowed, participation in which is only to be obtained by becoming enrolled in the fraternity. The Church is thus placed as an intermediary between the individual soul and God, and the stress laid on the necessity of identification with the community as the condition of justification is such that we almost at times seem brought back to the Catholic conception of *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. At the same time, with all this insistence on the Church, we are left entirely in the dark as to where the true Church is to be found. Is it the Lutheran, or Anglican, or Roman Catholic, or Greek, or Presbyterian Church, or any or all of these? Or is it a matter of indifference which? From aught that appears in Ritschl to the contrary, it might be imagined that a community of Christ, exhibiting all the attributes of a pure Church, had existed on earth in unbroken continuity from the beginning. Yet none knew better than Ritschl that such an idea would be utterly unhistorical. An important corollary from this view which should not be overlooked is that justification is, after all, not an act of personal forgiveness, or acceptance of the individual, at the time of his faith, but an eternal deed of the will of God in which the individual as such had no share. The religious consciousness may *figure* God to itself as forgiving, justifying, adopting,

at the moment of believing;* but this is only a "value-judging" way of looking at a transaction which actually has a totally different character. What is real is the eternal will of God that those who reckon themselves in this society of Christ's by faith shall have access to Himself without any hindrance arising from their past guilt. This will of God is *static* and unchanging. It exists in the eternal deed once for all. There is no real specific act of pardon, or adoption, when the sinner turns to Christ in faith. The whole change is on the sinner's side, who now comes to the *consciousness* of the justification which existed all along as a privilege of the community.

This mode of regarding the believer in his relation to the community explains to some extent the lines of Ritschl's solution of the difficult problem of the place of faith in the sinner's justification. Does faith precede justification, or does justification precede faith? The objection to the ordinary view, which makes faith precede justification, and yet regards it as a result of regeneration, is frequently urged by Ritschl.† For if, as he argues, faith is a result of regeneration, and yet precedes justification, then we have the paradox that the sinner is already renewed, made a child of God, before he is forgiven. On the other hand, if justification comes first, and regeneration follows, we have the equal paradox that the sinner is justified before he believes. Notwithstanding his criticisms of others, Ritschl's own expres-

* Cf. Ps. xxxii. 5; 1 John i. 9.

† *R. und V.*, i., pp. 186, 283, 285, 291, 294 (E. T., pp. 180, 268, 271, 276, 279), etc.

sions on this subject are by no means free from difficulty and ambiguity.* Formally, he makes faith the "condition of justification"; † but frequently also he speaks of faith as "called forth" by justification or reconciliation, *i.e.* as its consequence.‡ The contrariety here is palpable, though, unfortunately, it is too much of a piece with the habitual vagueness and fluctuation of expression in Ritschl which make it so difficult to fix him down to any precise idea. Probably, however, the solution of the antinomy is to be sought in the distinction we have just seen made between the justification of the community and the justification of the individual. Ideally, the community, which is the direct object of the justifying act, is viewed as in fellowship with Christ, and therefore as believing.§ Faith, from this highest standpoint, is the condition under which justification is granted. On the other

* Ritschl, indeed, has no difficulty about the antecedent regeneration. He gets rid of this by having no Holy Spirit to regenerate. It may be pointed out that the same difficulty about precedence arises on his own theory of justification of the community. If, *e.g.*, fellowship with Christ is made a condition of the justification of His community, this supposes a fellowship formed while the community (or its members) is yet *un*-justified or unpardoned.

† iii., pp. 96, 132, 135, etc. "The justification of sinners results under the condition of faith," etc. (p. 132).

‡ Pp. 97, 132. Here the faith of the sinner appears as "the result of justification." "This new direction of the will to God, which is called forth by reconciliation [elsewhere "reconciliation" *is* the new direction of the will], is, in the evangelical view, faith" (p. 97). "Since justification as reconciliation calls forth faith," etc. (p. 132). The representations stand side by side and are never fully harmonised.

§ Pp. 107, 124, 132, etc.

hand, the justification of the community precedes the faith of the individual. His faith appropriates a benefit already existing and presented to him in the preaching of the Gospel; * it precedes his consciousness of justification,† *i.e.* of his individual participation in this benefit; but it does not precede the benefit itself. Faith incorporates him in the community, and so makes him participant of the blessing there provided. Ingenious as this is, however, it will be generally felt that it evades the difficulty rather than meets it. We have only to reflect upon the subject to see that a justification of the community apart from the justification of the individuals comprised in it is an untenable abstraction, and that faith must, in the actual, as in the ideal relation, precede the bestowal of forgiveness. What *does* precede and awaken faith is the exhibition of God's character and grace in Christ, and the promise of salvation in the Gospel; the actual change of relation follows the exercise of faith; and the "new birth" is consummated in the same act which completes the surrender of the heart to God.

The result of justification, adoption, reconciliation, regeneration (all, we have seen, ultimately equated), is the New Life. This, again, in accordance with the doctrine of the twofold end, is to be distinguished in respect of its religious and of its moral functions. It has already been repeatedly shown how Ritschl con-

* P. 159, etc.

† What Ritschl calls the justification of believers is therefore really their coming to this consciousness of a share in the relation in which the community stands to God.

ceives of the blessedness of the believer on the religious side. The believer has, in Ritschl's phrase, "eternal life," that is, he attains supremacy—lordship (*Herrschaft*) — over the world, and exercises spiritual freedom.* Ritschl stays himself in this peculiar usage on Pauline texts,† but it may quite safely be affirmed that his idea of the eternal life and the Apostle's are widely apart. Paul also believes that the Christian rules the world, but Paul's view of spiritual freedom, or of eternal life (the terms are in no way synonymous with him, though the latter includes the former), involves much more than the maintaining of one's personal worth against the limitations and hindrances of nature and society, and the Apostle would scruple to regard justification, adoption, reconciliation —faith in providence, patience, humility, prayer, etc.— as means solely to that end. This desire for supremacy over the world is, as we saw in the theory of religion, on Ritschl's view, the deepest impulse in human nature, and the spring of man's religious ideas and strivings.‡ Religion has, in accordance with this,

* "The direct content of the eternal life, or blessedness, is to be recognised in the religious functions ruling the world" (p. 497). "Eternal life" signifies "that man in real fellowship with the true spiritual God has experience of himself as a whole over the world, since he proves the spiritual worth of his individuality in supremacy over all possible hindrances arising from the dividedness of the natural world (*aus der getheilten und natürlichen Welt*)" (p. 474). "Supremacy of the spirit over the world—viz., over the system of the natural and particular life-motives" (p. 577). Cf. pp. 492, 500, 504, etc.

† P. 465, etc.

‡ See Chapter IV.

fundamentally to do with a problem occasioned by man's position *in the world*, and Christianity approves itself divine as furnishing a solution of that problem.* It does this by inspiring and sustaining faith in God's Fatherly providence, and by inculcating in the believer, after Christ's example, the duties of patience and humility.† Patience under the evils of the world, humility towards God, the disposer of the events of our life, and prayer, specially as thanksgiving—these, springing from faith in God's providence, are the peculiarly religious functions.‡

Here, however, when we speak of providence, prayer, and of the believer's confidence that all things, evils included, are working for his good, it is

* We may quote one other passage on this subject. "Man," says Ritschl, "is part of the world. . . . Still he distinguishes himself as spirit from the world, wins through the idea of God the representation of his worth against the world [elsewhere it is this idea of worth which leads to the postulation of the idea of God], and raises himself in the Christian religion to the self-feeling that the worth of his spiritual personality outbids that of the whole natural system" (p. 585).

† Justification is said to be necessary, as a fundamental condition of the Christian life, to explain "how believers, by trust in God, humility, and patience, attain that position of superiority to the world which constitutes eternal life" (p. 504).

‡ "It is, in general, faith in the providence of God, in which religious supremacy over the world is exercised" (p. 583). "Faith in the Fatherly providence of God, which through humility maintains the (right) feeling with God, through patience the right feeling with the world, and which, through prayer, utters and confirms itself, is, in general, the content of the religious life which springs from reconciliation with God through Christ" (p. 616).

necessary to notice again carefully what is meant. It is not to be thought that the world proceeds according to any other than the ordinary mechanical or organic laws;* or that there is any special shaping of events in providence to meet the needs of individuals, or furnish answers to their prayers. This would be to trespass on a region outside the sphere of religious contemplation. The supremacy of the believer over the world is ideal, not empirical.† It is not that God, in His outward providence, adapts circumstances to his case, but he, in the exercise of his faith, is able by a spiritual alchemy to turn even the evils of the world to good account—to make them a means of spiritual furtherance, and an occasion of the proof of his spiritual freedom. We are specially warned against supposing "that man can exercise through prayers and counsels the least influence on the Divine arrangements."‡ Petitionary prayer is, on this ground, generally excluded, and we are taught to regard prayer as chiefly thanksgiving.§ The doctrine of providence, in brief, resolves itself practically into the conviction that the world is constituted for the ends of the spiritual life, and, with humility and patience, may be used by us for these ends. All else is subjective "value-judging."‖

* P. 574.

† Pp. 580, 583.

‡ P. 591.

§ Pp. 608-9. Even the petition in the Lord's Prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread," is explained as "an expression of thanksgiving to God."

‖ "The Christian view of the world . . . with the self-estimate which corresponds to it, constitutes the domain

In possession of this spiritual freedom, the believer devotes himself to the ethical task of his Christian calling—life in the service of the Kingdom of God according to the law of love of one's neighbour.* The working out of the details of this conception belongs to the sphere of Christian ethics, and need not specially detain us here. We would only recall the difficulty formerly noted of determining the place of this ethical end in Christianity in its relation to the other, or so-called religious, end. As the self-end of God, and the motive and final aim of creation—the end for which Christ lived and died, and which furnishes the sphere within which the freedom won in religion is to be exercised—we should naturally be disposed to regard it as the supreme end to which that of freedom is subordinate. For what value, as formerly remarked, can we attach to a freedom which does not include an ethical end within itself and feel that it exists for the carrying out of this end? This, however, is not Ritschl's view. His original dualism hampers him all through. Fearful, apparently, lest the directly religious interests should be imperilled

within which are formed all such representations as that all things and events in the world serve for our good, because, as children of God, we are objects of the particular care and help of God" (p. 583). There is some ground for Stählin's criticism that "if providence neither reaches out beyond the actual course of things, nor can intervene therein, it has *no other content than that very course* itself: so that when a man trusts in providence, he has no more guarantee for his personal security than when he trusts to the actual existent order of things."—*Kant, Lotze, und Ritschl*, p. 232 (E. T.).

* P. 577.

by subordinating them to morality, he will have it that his religious supremacy over the world is an end by itself, and the supreme end; and will not acknowledge—what his own view of God might have taught him to admit—that an ethical element enters essentially into religion also, and that in root the two spheres are one. Neither need we dwell on the point earlier insisted upon, that the bare formula of reciprocal action according to love yields no concrete content for the idea of the Kingdom of God. The abstract rubric—"Love your neighbour, and faithfully discharge the duties of your station"—which is nearly as far as the Ritschlian theology carries us, needs filling out from a knowledge of the ordinary moral duties and relations—that is, from that which has its ground in nature and the ordinary moral consciousness—in order that we may have a concrete image of what is meant by God's will being done on earth.

The Ritschlian system has practically no Eschatology. It is not that by Ritschl or his followers the future life is doubted: on the contrary, it is affirmed, and assumed, apparently, to be the sphere in which the moral issues of this life are determined.* "Man," says Ritschl, "compares himself even with the whole natural system, since in his spiritual self-feeling he apprehends himself as a being who in his greatness (*eine Grösse*) stands near to the supra-mundane God, and makes the claim to live, notwithstanding the

* Pp. 575-6.

experience of death." * But the problems of this future life are left untouched. They are presumed to be of no practical interest to us, or at least to be so completely beyond our knowledge that it is vain to discuss them. Interest is concentrated wholly on the present life—on the realisation of eternal life in a present supremacy over the world; on the Kingdom of God as now and here existing. Such questions, *e.g.*, as those of the fate of the heathen, or of the masses outside of the Church; of the possibility of salvation hereafter for those who die here impenitent or in ignorance; of the conditions of the final Judgment, etc., are hardly so much as glanced at. † No place is found for such subjects as the resurrection of the dead,‡ or the second advent, though Jesus and the early Church had much to say of both. The one point on which an opinion is expressed is that already alluded to, viz., that if any be found definitively resisting the will of God (a hypothetical case), they shall be destroyed.§ But, in truth, this reserve is no accident of the Ritschlian system. It lay in the nature of the case that, consistently with the general principles of his theology, Ritschl *could* have no eschatology. Salvation, with its twofold end,

* P. 576. Immortality is based here on a natural ground. Is not this a species of natural theology? And why no reference to the *Christian* ground?

† We are told that Ritschl refrained from all judgment of the question of the heathen.—*Leben*, ii., p. 199.

‡ There is allusion to "the Christian hope of the continued duration of the spiritual life in a suitable body" (p. 575), but nothing more is made of it.

§ *R. und V.*, ii., pp. 140–42; iii., p. 359.

has, as he has sketched it, a relation to this life alone. If, *e.g.*, eternal life is defined as supremacy over the *world*—the religious ruling of the world—what would be its meaning for a state in which this world had ceased to exist? If, again, the divine self-end which man is to realise is a Kingdom of God of human beings *on earth*—what end remains when the believer is transferred to conditions beyond death? A great gap—a solution of continuity—exists here, not only in our knowledge, but in the nature of things, between the present and the future. Justification, adoption, lordship over the world, the Kingdom of God, all have reference only to the existing temporal scene—are set in it as their framework. What will happen "when the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved," and the present natural system altogether shall have passed away—who can tell? The whole Ritschlian nomenclature of salvation loses its significance.

CHAPTER VII

LATER DEVELOPMENTS OF THE RITSCHLIAN THEOLOGY—AGREEMENT AND DIVERGENCIES OF RITSCHL'S DISCIPLES.

A System tested by its Development—Differences in the School, with Agreement in Leading Ideas—Agreements and Differences on the Theory of Knowledge—Relations of Religious and Theoretic Knowledge—Meaning of "Value-Judgments"—Agreements and Differences in Doctrine of Religion—Views on History, Theological Method, and Christian Apologetic—The "Speculative" Method in Kaftan—Relation of the School to Miracle—to Christ's Resurrection—Agreements and Differences on Doctrine of the Kingdom of God—Views on Christology—Herrmann, Schultz, etc., on the "Godhead" of Christ—Idea of Revelation in Christ—Agreements and Differences on Doctrines of Sin and Salvation—Kaftan on Sin and Guilt—Forgiveness of Sins in Herrmann and Kaftan—Connection with Christ's Death—Häring on Atonement—The Christian Life—Divergencies on Mysticism—The Doctrine of the Exalted Christ—The Church—Eschatology—Troeltsch on Ritschlian "Subjectivism"—Relation of the School to Scripture.

LIGHT is cast on the true genius of a system by the course of its historical development. Those parts of the system which are discarded, or are allowed to drop quietly into the background, by its later representatives, may fairly be assumed not to belong to its essence—unless, indeed, the disciples, as sometimes

happens, have all the more grievously failed to understand their master.* Those features, on the other hand, which men of differently constituted minds and divergent tendencies agree in conserving, may fitly be regarded as the elements of chief importance. The application of this principle to the Ritschlian theology considerably simplifies our present task. We have dwelt with particularity on Ritschl's own theology, both because of its epoch-making influence, and as the classical exhibition of the ideas of the school; but it will not be necessary to study with the same minuteness the theories of his followers. It is the fact that the school of Ritschl disemburdens itself to a large extent of the master's elaborate theology. Where system has been attempted—*e.g.* by Kaftan—the divergence from Ritschl is often noteworthy. The general feeling in the party would seem to be that the time has not yet come for theological reconstruction—that the "new dogma" is yet to seek—and that meanwhile, perhaps for long, its task must lie in laying and strengthening foundations,—in working at the preparatory disciplines of Biblical Theology, Church History, History of Dogma, in investigation of particular notions, etc. Yet through all the labours of its members certain regulative aims and ideas may be traced—impulses and thoughts they have received in common from Ritschl—affinities in conception and method, and to a certain extent also agreement in

* Christianity itself is an instance of this, for how immeasurably does the subapostolic Age, *e.g.*, fall below the thoughts of Jesus! Yet the history of Christianity, as a whole, is the interpreter of Christ's Gospel.

results — which enable us to group them together and speak of them with propriety as a "school." Our aim in this chapter will be to bring out the leading features in this agreement, and to show how, within its limits, wide divergencies also reveal themselves.

In no respect is the dependence of the school on Ritschl more conspicuous than in the stress it lays on the importance for theology of *a correct theory of knowledge*, and particularly on *a right appreciation of the distinction between religious and theoretic knowledge*. Aiming with Ritschl at the complete separation of theology from metaphysics, his followers are, like him, in the paradoxical position of being compelled to fall back on a philosophical theory for the justification of their procedure. All agree that a right theory of knowledge is indispensable for theology, but there is by no means the same harmony as to what the right theory of knowledge is. Here the members of the school go widely apart. Herrmann, *e.g.*, is avowedly Kantian;* Kaftan is empiricist, and rejects the

* See his *Die Met. in der Theol.*, but specially his *Die Religion in Verhältniss zum Welterkenntniss und zur Sittlichkeit*. Herrmann has the advantage over Ritschl that he explicitly follows Kant in affirming an *a priori* source for the moral law —*Die Religion*, etc., pp. 162-4, etc. Yet he also astonishingly says: "Whether the thought of the unconditioned law originates psychologically from an experience of pleasure is for ethics quite indifferent" (p. 159). There is a yet deeper divergence from Kant in the way in which he views the moral law, as well as religion, as a means to the satisfaction of the "feeling of self" (*Selbstgefühl*), with him the primary impulse in human nature.

a priori element in knowledge and in moral law;* Traub is idealistic;† Bender volatilises religious ideas into subjective representations;‡ and the remarkable thing is that all these writers, with a certain show of reason, can claim the support of Ritschl for their views. Nevertheless, there is justification for grouping them, with their divergent speculations, as is commonly done, under the general designation of "Neo-Kantian." All show more or less a dependence on Kant; all are at one with him in his limitation of knowledge to phenomena, and in his exaltation of the practical over the theoretic reason. How largely even Kaftan may be ranked as Kantian is apparent from the account he gives of the services rendered by that great thinker to the Christian religion. Kant, he claims, gave back to Christianity the practical faith that distinguished it, after that faith had lost its peculiar character from the second century onwards. He did this by liberating the idea of the chief good from its combination with knowledge, and placing it instead in closest relation to man's

* *Das Wesen*, p. 49 (1st edit.); *Die Wahrheit*, pp. 362, 381, 404, etc. (E. T., ii., pp. 129, 155, 187, etc.). Reischle subjects Kaftan's theory of knowledge to a sharp criticism in *Studien und Kritiken*, 1891.

† See his article on *Ritschl's Erkenntnisstheorie* in *Zeitschrift für Theol. und Kirche*, 1894, pp. 91 ff. Traub, as before remarked, attributes his idealistic view to Ritschl himself.

‡ Cf. his *Das Wesen d. Religion.* Among other amenities of the school we have Herrmann in *Theol. Lit.-Zeit.* for 1886 (No. 4), describing Bender as only "a secularised Kaftan"; while Kaftan will have it that Herrmann is back to the ground which makes a philosophic view determinative for theology.—*Das Wesen*, p. 13.

moral life. The chief significance of his work "may, accordingly, be described by saying that he first expressed this primary idea of Christianity as an absolute principle, and established it philosophically by his criticism of man's intellectual faculty." * In this tribute to Kant most writers of the school would concur.

The more precise distinction of religious and theoretic knowledge raises greater difficulties. Herrmann stands nearest to Ritschl in his general position: if anything, as formerly hinted, he pushes the two spheres further apart than Ritschl himself. He advocates even a twofold sense of the term "reality," and grounds religious reality in the feeling which the subject has of the worth of his highest ends.† To him also belongs the initiative in the employment of the term "*Werthurtheil*"—"judgment of value." Bender, a pupil of Ritschl's, went further still in resolving our religious ideas into simple products of phantasy for the ends of the spiritual life.‡ This was too much, and the "Bender controversy" § resulted in the effort of members of the school to come to a

* *Die Wahrheit*, pp. 211-13 (E. T., i., pp. 284–7).

† *Die Religion*, etc., pp. 112–19. "If this Power over the world stands fast to religious faith as something real, the category of reality has another meaning here than in metaphysics. For the validity of the religious object has its root solely in a definite energy of self-feeling" (p. 118). Religious objects being judged real only for the sake of their worth, science, he thinks, from its point of view, would be justified in regarding them as mere illusion.

‡ *Das Wesen*, pp. 22, 89, 105, etc.

§ On the literature of this controversy see Nippold's *Einzelschule*, ii., pp. 150–61.

better understanding as to the relation of "religious" and "theoretic." The dispute has turned chiefly on the meaning and place of the "judgment of value." It was felt necessary to guard against the idea that judgments of this class were mere illusions, and to rebut the supposition that what was held for truth in one sphere could be falsehood in another. Kaftan seeks to soften the opposition by granting that faith also expresses itself in "theoretic judgments"—meaning by the latter judgments that affirm existence *—and would save the peculiarity of the propositions of faith by saying that they "*rest on* judgments of value." † This view is modified by Scheibe, who prefers to speak of judgments in the religious sphere as "postulates on the ground of value, postulates which rest on judgments of value."‡ Scheibe, in agreement with Herrmann, and, apparently, with Kaftan also, would base the conviction of the reality of the religious object solely on the judgment of value; § but others, as O. Ritschl,

* This evokes the protest of O. Ritschl, Traub, etc., who object to this identification of theoretical judgments with simple judgments of being, as if judgments of value were not also judgments of being.

† *Das Wesen*, pp. 38 ff.; *Die Wahrheit*, pp. 1–7, etc.

‡ *Die Bedeutung der Werturteile*, p. 52.

§ Scheibe puts the case in the strongest way. He quotes with approval Paulsen's saying, "Faith is a certainty—which does not rest on theoretic considerations—that that *is* which *should* be." "Because these representations and judgments [of God, His nature, will, providence, etc.], correspond with the religious needs, we are convinced of their reality and truth: they are demanded, postulated, by the religious man." —P. 51.

describe this as a surrender of the position, and declare that by this method we can never get to real objectivity.* There remains the attempt of O. Ritschl, Traub, etc., to give an interpretation to the term "judgment of value," which shall not compromise the reality of the object. The "judgment of value" is now declared to mean no more than that "in religious judgments the highest subjective interest is included."† If this were really all, it might well be asked—who ever doubted it? Or what ground remains for an absolute separation between religious and theoretic knowledge? It will readily be conceded to Traub that the full conviction of the reality of the religious object is only possible to a mind that has experience of its worth.‡ But this does not touch the main question

* *Ueber Werthurtheile*, p. 27.

† *Leben*, ii., p. 212. O. Ritschl here states the view that, according to Ritschl, "judgments of *value* stand, not in opposition to so-called judgments of *being*, but to the theoretic judgments of *science*, regarded as excluding every subjective interest," and makes the contrast to consist only in the fact that "religious judgments of value include the highest subjective interest in the object of knowledge." This explanation which, if accepted, would reduce the distinction to something like a truism, can hardly be sustained in face of Ritschl's own statements. It provides for no such thorough-going distinction of the religious and theoretic as Ritschl postulates; it makes the distinction relative—one of degree—whereas Ritschl will have it to be absolute; it overlooks the fact that Ritschl recognises no purely disinterested judgments even in science. See below, Chap. VIII.

‡ *Zeitschrift*, 1894, p. 111. "The question is, how can we be certain of that objective truth? and here Ritschl maintains that this can only happen within the experience of the worth expressed by the propositions of faith. In other words,

as to the grounds on which the conviction of reality rests. Are these objective, or only subjective? If the latter, we seem back to the view that it is the judgment of value which grounds the conviction of reality, and this has already been pronounced by these writers to be unsatisfactory. We reserve further discussion to a succeeding chapter.

The same wide divergence of view within a general framework of agreement is observable in the development given by the school to Ritschl's *doctrine of religion*. Common features here are the denial of any original or essential—at least conscious—bond between the soul and God, such, *e.g.*, as is implied in Schleiermacher's feeling of absolute dependence *; of any natural Revelation of God from which a measure of knowledge of His being or attributes may rationally be deduced; and the explanation of the idea of God as a postulate to account for and safeguard man's

the facts of salvation prove themselves to be real facts only to him who experiences their saving significance in his inner man. . . . The certainty of faith is not the result of theoretic knowledge, but of personal conviction." The point is—What creates this personal conviction? If Traub says the experience of worth alone, in what respect does his position differ from that of Kaftan, Herrmann, or Scheibe?

* Schultz in this respect occupies an independent position, and can hardly be regarded as a pure Ritschlian. His views are as much coloured by Schleiermacher as by Ritschl. With the former he finds "the elementary fundamental trait of religion" in the "feeling of absolute dependence," and declares that "from faith in Revelation it is certain that religion in its deepest ground is a life wrought by God Himself in man."—*Grundriss d. Dogmatik*, p. 53.

position in the world as spiritual personality. The writers who have wrought out the theory most in detail are Herrmann and Kaftan; but the differences of the two are characteristic. With Herrmann the central impulse is the "feeling of self," or sense of the worth of one's personality, which bears in it the claim to rule the world, and needs for this end that the world be conceived of as a unity, and as ruled over by a Power who orders things for the best.* It is this practical impulse, he holds, and not theoretic thought, which yields the idea of a world-whole, and, in union with our consciousness of unconditioned moral law, compels us to conceive of the world as a teleological system.† With Kaftan, on the other hand, the starting-point is the empirical desire for good—that is, for happiness or blessedness—which he finds native to the human spirit, and designates "the claim for life."‡ His system is thus "eudæmonistic" in character, § and is framed through an analysis of the conditions under which the "claim for life" can be perfectly satisfied. The satisfaction, he finds, is possible only on the hypothesis of a supramundane

* Cf. *Die Religion*, pp. 80–83. "The maintenance of his person and the realisation of his highest good is to him one and the same thing. If, therefore, his self-feeling incites him to form in religion the idea of a Power ruling nature for the best, this Power receives henceforward a concrete determinate character from the quality of the highest good for the sake of which it is thought by us as active" (p. 83).

† Pp. 81, 85, 208 ff., 231 ff.

‡ *Das Wesen*, pp. 49, 50, 55, etc.

§ *Das Wesen*, p. 187. "It is neither the æsthetic nor the moral, but solely the natural or eudæmonistic estimate of worth which makes the ground-character of life."

Kingdom of God, which, accordingly, he exalts to the dignity of "a postulate of reason." * A further postulate is that there shall be an historical Revelation to bring this Kingdom into being, and certify to us its reality.† These conditions are then found by him to be realised in the Christian religion.‡ To Bender, again, as remarked above, religious ideas are only ideals. The idea of God "frames itself from the need of so thinking the world-development that the specifically human ideal of a perfectly blessed life is attainable in spite of apparent contradictions." §

The premises laid down in the theory of knowledge and the theory of religion lead to important results in *the spheres of historical judgment, theological method, and Christian apologetic*, and with respect to these also the school of Ritschl may be said to be generally in agreement. The principles affirmed as to the exclusion of metaphysics from theology contain—or

* *Die Wahrheit*, p. 548 (E. T., ii., p. 380). He rejects even the limitation "practical" reason which Kant employs (E. T., p. 381).

† "The existence of the eternal supramundane Kingdom of God is therefore a postulate of reason, and from this postulate there arises the other postulate of an historical Revelation of God which has the supramundane Kingdom of God as its content. . . . Therefore it must be said that the postulate of the supramundane Kingdom of God forms itself into the other postulate as a special Revelation of the Kingdom of God in history" (E. T., ii., pp. 382–4).

‡ "Now it can be shown that reason and Revelation meet in the same conception of the chief good," etc. (E. T., p. 386).

§ Bender, *Das Wesen*, pp. 89–90 ; cf. pp. 85, 105, etc.

are supposed to contain—a condemnatory judgment on the past history of dogma in the Church. On no subject is the school more entirely at one, or may claim to be treading more faithfully in the steps of its founder, than in the account it gives of the origin of early dogma as the result of a fusion of Christian ideas with Greek philosophical thought. It may be sufficient to refer here to two distinguished representatives of this view—Harnack and Kaftan. To Harnack the history of early Christian dogma is simply the history of the process of the Hellenisation of Christianity. His task in his *History of Dogma* is to show that "dogma in its conception and development is a work of the Greek spirit on the soil of the Gospel." * Kaftan similarly declares: "The Christian faith and Greek philosophy are the two factors from whose interaction ecclesiastical dogma rose." † This means more than merely that Christianity was betrayed into borrowing certain of the ideas found in its intellectual environment. It denotes, in Kaftan's

* *Dogmengeschichte*, i., p. 18 (E. T., pp. 17, 21). As against his opponents (see E. T.), Harnack lays stress on the words, "on the soil of the Gospel," but overlooks that the leading idea is still "the work of the Greek spirit." We may be wrong, but we think we can discern a more positive spirit in the later editions of Harnack's work. Loofs, a disciple, in an early review, shows that, on the Ritschlian hypothesis which Harnack develops, dogma is a product of the union of Christianity with Græco-Roman philosophy, and cannot be regarded as a development of what existed in germ in primitive Christianity. He points out that the selection of material in Harnack's history "is conditioned solely by the leading thought of the book."—*Deutsche Evang.-Blätter*, 1886, pp. 182-3.

† *Die Wahrheit*, p. 23 (E. T., i., p. 31 ; cf. p. 75).

view, a fundamentally new mode of contemplating Christianity, and consequent shifting of the centre of gravity of the Christian system. In the Greek ideal the chief good is to be sought along the path of knowledge.* To this intellectualist conception Christianity from the second century onward committed itself, with the result of the substitution of the Logos-idea for that of the Kingdom of God as the ruling idea in theology.† "The centre of gravity," we are told, "instead of being placed in the historical Christ who founded the Kingdom of God, is placed in the Christ who, as the eternal Logos of God, was the mediator in the creation of the world."‡ An "historical necessity" in the development is indeed admitted, for, "in order to strike root in the educated world of Greece and Rome . . . Christianity had to accommodate itself to the intellectual life existing in that world."§ But the change involved none the less a fatal misconception of the real character of the Christian faith. Scholastic theology followed faithfully in the false path thus marked out, and "Protestant dogmatics continued in the paths of scholasticism."‖ Only with Kant was the supremacy of the primary idea which governed the development overthrown.¶ The elements of truth in this theory must not blind us to the fact that it

* Pp. 32, 212 (E. T., i., pp. 42, 286).

† P. 86 (E. T., p. 89).

‡ P. 73 (E. T., p. 97).

§ P. 55 (E. T., p. 74). Harnack also adopts the principle that "everything must happen as it has happened."—*Dogmengeschichte* (E. T., i., p. 22).

‖ P. 142 (E. T., p. 192; cf. pp. 240, 285, etc.).

¶ P. 212 (E. T., p. 287).

is carried by the Ritschlian writers to an extreme which converts it sometimes almost into caricature. The early Apologists and fathers may have given—no doubt did give—too intellectualistic a cast to their Logos speculations;* but the Logos doctrine which they defended, with the transcendental view of the Person of Christ which it implied, was no product of Greek philosophy, but an element of Apostolic teaching, to which, in their controversies with the Ebionitic, Monarchian, Arian, and other heretical tendencies of their day, these fathers of the Church did well to be faithful. It is significant that, in a recent utterance, Kaftan formally discards the whole Logos conception of the Fourth Gospel as unsuitable to Christianity.† If the doctrines in question are to be assailed, it should be frankly recognised that the blow falls, not solely on the theology of the Greek fathers, who but fought with the best means at their disposal for what they conceived to be vital issues of the Christian faith, but on the theology of the New Testament itself.

* It is, however, an exaggeration to speak of their exaltation of knowledge as if the way to it, in their view, did not lie through faith, humility, and holy living. The motto of Gregory of Nazianzum is in some degree the motto of all these fathers —"Practice is the way to knowledge." "There is no true life without knowledge," says the author of the Epistle to Diognetus, "and no sure knowledge without life." Even in Clement of Alexandria pædagogy precedes *gnosis*. It should be observed also that the attitude of many of the apologists is exceedingly hostile to Greek learning, though they availed themselves, in controversy with pagans, of what testimonies it offered them to the truths of natural religion.

† In his Eisenach Address (Oct. 1896), reprinted in *Zeitschrift*, January 1897.

Harnack's own pages furnish abundant acknowledgment that in the leading controversies of the early (and later) Church it was really the essence of the Gospel which was being contended for against many-sided perversions of it.*

As, however, we found in Ritschl the disclaiming of metaphysics in theology going hand in hand with the boldest use of the speculative method on his own lines, so is it with the theologians of his school. Kaftan is here also a typical example, though Herrmann, in his earlier work on Religion, stands no whit behind him. Reason on its theoretic side is to be repelled from theology, but no limits, apparently, are to be set to what it can accomplish when resting on a *practical* judgment. By its help, under Kaftan's

* The following are a few examples. On the Athanasian controversy, after a severe criticism of Arianism, it is said that Athanasius saved an abiding conviction of faith "against a doctrine which did not understand the inner nature of religion generally, which sought in religion only teaching, and ultimately found its satisfaction in an empty dialectic."—*Grundriss*, i., p. 141; *Dogmengeschichte*, ii., pp. 217-24. On the Augustinian theology—"Whoever looks away from the formulas to the spirit will find everywhere in the writings of Augustine a stream of Pauline faith."—*D. G.*, iii., p. 78. On Soteriology—"That the work of Christ was His achievement, that it culminates in His sacrificial death, that it signifies the vanquishing and effacing of the guilt of sin, that salvation consequently consists in the forgiveness, the justification, and the adoption of man, are thoughts which are wholly absent in no Church father. In some they stand out boldly."—*Ibid*, iii., p. 50. On Socinianism—"With the old dogmas Socinianism has at bottom set aside Christianity as a religion. Guilt and penitence, faith and grace, are conceptions which are only saved by inconsistencies—out of regard to the New Testament—from being wholly eliminated."—*Ibid.*, iii., p. 691.

guidance, we not only rise to the idea of God as World-Creator, Upholder, and Providential Ruler; to the idea of a "world-whole," and of a "world-end"; but are enabled to determine "the rational, absolute idea of the chief good," and to postulate the necessity of an "eternal supramundane Kingdom of God" for the realisation of this good*; then by comparison with the Christian Revelation to prove the validity of the latter. The task of Dogmatics itself is defined as "a speculative" task. "The process of thought is speculative in its nature; it does not spring from the reflection of the understanding . . . the system of thought peculiar to faith rests on that process of thought which is of a speculative description."† It is little to be told after this that on the high level thus reached a perfect reconciliation between reason and Revelation is attainable. One only wonders why, since so much is conceded to speculative reason, a little more should not be allowed—why, for instance, if it is legitimate to postulate a transcendent basis for the universe in a living, personal God, and a supramundane Kingdom of God for the realisation of the idea of the good, it should not be legitimate

* See references above.

† *Die Wahrheit*, pp. 571–73 (E. T., ii., pp. 411–13). Schultz's *Grundriss d. Dogmatik* furnishes illustrations of how largely the speculative method can be employed in theology. When, *e.g.*, we reach such propositions as "the world cannot have had a temporal beginning . . . even so the world is not limited in space," we are surely in a region little less "theoretic" than that in which the old Dogmatics move. Cf. pp. 30-1. Schultz, however, is hardly, as already observed, a quite typical Ritschlian.

also to postulate a transcendental background for the Person of Christ, and a pre-temporal as well as a post-temporal state of existence for Him—why the one should be "metaphysical" and the other not?*

The subject of method here touched on has an important relation to the treatment by the Ritschlian theologians of questions of Christian Apologetics. It was before shown that Ritschl and his disciples are substantially at one in their views of the lines on which a Christian apologetic should proceed†; and we have had examples in Herrmann and Kaftan of how the work is actually done. It is on all hands recognised that a "scientific grounding" of the Christian faith is necessary, if "universal validity" is to be vindicated for it.‡ It is not, indeed, easy to see whence, on strict Ritschlian principles, this necessity arises, or how the apologetic procedure is to be justified. If faith has, as alleged, its all-sufficient grounds of certainty within itself, and its purity is imperilled by the slightest contact with theoretic thought, it is not obvious how the situation is essentially changed by simply substituting "practical" for "theoretic" reason. For faith is still made dependent for the proof of its validity on something beyond itself. Not to insist that a proof of "universal

* In his *Die Religion*, etc., Herrmann seemed disposed to take this very view, and to postulate a real pre-existence of Christ as involved in Christian faith.—Pp. 438–9. See passage quoted below, p. 210.

† See Chap. IV.

‡ *Die Religion*, etc., Pref.; cf. pp. 273–81. "The dogmatic proof has for its object to set forth the universal validity of religious knowledge" (p. 281).

validity"*—a "scientific" proof—which is to involve no exercise of theoretic thought, is a contradiction in terms. This, however, is what the Ritschlian apologists aim at—the proof, viz., in Herrmann's words, "that Christianity is the absolute religion," and that its view of the world has "universal validity."† The nerve of this proof lies for him in our consciousness of the unconditioned moral law ‡; for Kaftan, as we have seen, in the idea of the "*supra*mundane Kingdom of God" as a supposed "postulate of reason."§ There is no need to deny that, apart from their distinctive presuppositions, many true and suggestive thoughts lie in the Ritschlian apologetic. With proper limitations, much of its contention might readily be admitted. No one, for example, would contend that an objective study of nature, which did not take into account also the facts of our personal and moral life, would yield us a proper idea of God. But it is an equal one-sidedness if these facts alone are founded on,

* It would be a legitimate task for the Ritschlians to make clear the grounds of certainty which faith has *in itself*; but we get far beyond this when we proceed to vindicate for them a universal validity" by appeal to principles which are prior to, and independent in their nature of, Christian faith, or the Christian Revelation.

† *Die Religion*, etc., p. 273. It is characteristic that, after all, in this work, Herrmann has to recognise, like Ritschl, that metaphysics has an important *rôle* to play in theology (pp. 356–60), and defends himself towards the close from the reproach of seeking to split the world of knowledge into two (pp. 440–7).

‡ Pp. 272–75.

§ See references above.

and the theoretic indications of God's existence are ignored.

Without dwelling further on the general subject of apologetics, we may pause for a moment to inquire how the school relates itself to the crucial question touched on in an earlier chapter—the question, viz., of the *miraculous*, as lying on the borderland between natural knowledge and religion. This question is not to be got rid of on the general plea that the Christian Revelation has nothing to do with "Welterkenntniss." The order of the world is there, and the Ritschlian theologian, as well as others, has to come to some understanding with it.* He has to explain what he means, compatibly with the existence of this order, when he speaks of "Revelation," of "special providence," of "prayer," of "miracle." He may define miracle as "a religious event" if he will, but the fact remains that if Christ did the works He is recorded to have done, or literally rose from the dead on the third day, there have been breaks in the world's order as we know it, or a transcendence of that order.† Christ Himself, as Herrmann is never weary of reminding us, is a "fact" in history—an integral part of the world's objective order—and the question

* In point of fact the difficulties of the question are being constantly discussed in the articles and pamphlets of the school—generally, it ought to be acknowledged, in an earnest and praiseworthy spirit.

† The plea is therefore inept that the Scripture conception of miracle has no relation to the modern notion of natural law. Nothing is clearer than that, if the modern assumption of an unbroken chain of causation in the world is correct, the miracles recorded in the Gospels *did not happen.*

cannot be shirked as to how He is related to that order of the world in origin and constitution. We saw before in how ambiguous a position Ritschl left this whole question of miracle *; we must now look at the treatment of the problem by his followers.

On the historical question, the general attitude taken up is that faith is not committed to the acceptance of particular miraculous incidents; it is unaffected by the critical doubts which may be cast on any or all of these. It neither rests on the evidence of miracles, nor would be overthrown by disproof of their occurrence.† The historian can never regard them as sure historical events.‡ A deeper question, however, is whether, in the world-system as it exists, any place is left for events such as we ordinarily denominate miracles. The common reply to this again is, that it is a matter with which faith, as such, has no concern; § but we have only

* See Chapter IV., p. 93.

† Cf. Herrmann, *Verkehr*, pp. 190–91 (E. T., pp. 182–3), etc.

‡ "The historian," says Harnack, "cannot regard a miracle as a sure historical event; for in doing so, he destroys the mode of consideration on which all historical investigation rests. Every individual miracle remains historically quite doubtful, and a summation of things doubtful can never lead to certainty." He goes on to say, however, that, provided we *can* accept the history, the impression of Christ's Person will justify us in ascribing to Him the possession of supernatural power.—*Dogmengeschichte*, p. 59 (E. T., i., p. 65).

§ Cf. Herrmann, *Die Religion*, p. 383: "The discussion for or against the trustworthiness of the narratives of miracles in the Gospels on principial grounds is for the present-day task of theology perfectly indifferent."

to reflect that the whole supernatural estimate of Christ's Person is involved in it to feel that this is very far from being the case. No theologian, in fact, does or can take up a neutral attitude to the conception of the world which excludes miracle, and his personal conviction on this subject will inevitably colour his treatment of the question of miracle in the Christian Revelation. And here, among the Ritschlian theologians, different tendencies reveal themselves. A few, as Kaftan, declare themselves decidedly in favour of the possibility and reality of miracles.* Others, inclining personally to the side of faith, though with many qualifications and reservations, plead for the question being left an open one;† not a few, apparently, accept the modern scientific doctrine of an unbroken order of causation

* *Die Wahrheit*, pp. 560-1 (E. T., ii., pp. 397-8). Kaftan's ground is that "laws of nature" are only empirical generalisations, and have no necessity about them which excludes belief in miracle. He cannot understand how a Christian theologian should assent to the impossibility of miracle, or be surprised at finding them in the history of Revelation, and the life of Jesus. Thus also Häring, Kähler, etc.

† Thus, *e.g.*, Sell, in a paper on *Der Wunderglaube* in the *Zeitschrift*, 1892. The question is—what is a clergyman to do who cannot believe in miracles? Sell thinks that if such a person has the faith in the uniqueness and influence of Christ's personality which the faith in miracles expresses, he ought not to be pressed as to his belief in the particular miracles narrated by Jesus (p. 511). He himself argues for the reality of Christ's resurrection, and of a miraculous power in the ministry, but dismisses the miracles of the Old Testament, the Virgin-birth, the cases of demon-possession, the feeding of the multitudes, etc., and will not impose his faith on others.

in nature,* and treat miracles, in the strict sense, as historically inadmissible. All are agreed that, if miracles are to be believed in any form, it must be as the result of a prior faith in the unique spiritual personality of Christ. And even the more believing section of the school accept the Biblical records of the miracles with exceedingly large discretion as to detail.† The controversy on the Apostles' Creed, occasioned by the refusal of a young pastor, C. Schrempf,‡ to use this symbol in baptism, has, there is reason to think, produced in some quarters a more positive note. As a testing example of the general position of the school in relation to

* Herrmann's position is ambiguous. In *Verkehr*, p. 267 (E. T., p. 248), he seems to accept Kant's doctrine that "nothing that can be proved to happen in this world lies outside the domain of the law of cause and effect," and he certainly attaches no importance in this work to the narratives of miracles in the Gospels, but leaves them, with apparent good-will, to be regarded as legends. Cf. also his article on *Religion und Socialdemokratie* in *Zeitschrift*, 1891. In his earlier work, *Die Religion*, he takes the same ground as to the necessity of thinking all events in the connection of cause and effect, yet leaves room for events which are to us mysterious, and in a sense miracles.—Cf. pp. 384–6. Schultz upholds miracles in the religious sense, but seems to deny them as nature-wonders.—*Dogmatik*, p. 37 ; *Apologetik*, pp. 21, 23.

† Cf., *e.g.*, Ziegler's article in *Zeitschrift*, 1896, on *Der Glaube an die Auferstehung Jesu Christi* referred to below. He accepts the resurrection, but places little reliance on the evangelical narratives of it (p. 248).

‡ Of Leuzenbach, in Würtemberg. Schrempf is Kantian in standpoint, and does not admit miracles. He was deposed by the authorities for his refusal to abide by the Church ritual. On the literature of the controversy cf. Nippold, ii., pp. 232 ff.

miracle, we cannot do better than refer again to its attitude to the crowning miracle of the Resurrection of Christ. Resurrection in a certain sense, as formerly shown,* *i.e.*, as a rising of Christ to glory, is indeed affirmed; not, however, on historical evidence, but as a "thought of faith," a deduction from the impression of spiritual greatness and goodness Christ makes upon us †—but of that supreme event which formed the burden of the Apostolic preaching—the rising of Christ in the body on the third day—it cannot be said, despite noteworthy exceptions, that there is any general acceptance; instead, often, halting and indecisive utterance, and frequently tacit or avowed rejection.‡

NOTE.—*Views of Ritschlians on the Resurrection of Christ.* —We may thus briefly summarise the views of some of the leading members of the school. Kaftan, Häring, and Kähler accept the historic fact—represent, therefore, the right or positive wing of the school on this question. (Cf. Kaftan, as above; Häring in his *Das Bleibende im Glauben an Christus*, and *Der dopp. Wahrheit* (p. 24); Kähler, in his *Der sogenannte historische Jesus*, etc.).—Kattenbusch, Sell, Ziegler, etc., are on the same side with more or less qualification (cf. Kattenbusch in *Theol. Lit.-Ztg.*, 1894, cols. 169-70; Sell on *Der Wunderglaube*, etc., in *Zeitschrift*, 1892; Ziegler on *Der*

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* See Chapter IV.

† Thus Herrmann. Cf. remarks on his position in O. Ritschl's article in *Zeitschrift*, 1897, referred to below.

‡ Ziegler says in his article in *Zeitschrift*, 1896, p. 219, that it is made a reproach to the "modern theology," and specially to the "school of Ritschl," that it fights shy of the fact of the resurrection, and utters itself about it in "the most indefinite possible modes of expression," and admits that there is much truth in the charge.

Glaube an die Auferstehung, *Ibid.*, 1896).—Bornemann accepts the "appearances" to the disciples, but holds it to be immaterial whether they were bodily appearances, or the result of supernatural impressions (*Unterricht*, p. 85).—This seems also to be the position of Reischle, who, speaking of the appearances to the disciples as "divine Revelations of truth," says, "I designedly use this expression, which leaves the mode of those appearances still open" (Art. on *Die Begründung des Glaubens auf den "geschichtlichen" Jesus Christus*, in *Zeitschrift*, 1897, p. 203). He agrees with Herrmann that the "one anchorage" of faith in the resurrection is the "impression" of the Person of Christ, but is more positive somewhat than Herrmann (p. 203).—J. Weiss, likewise, argues for supernatural impressions on the disciples (like Keim), but does not affirm a *bodily* resurrection (*Die Nachfolge Christi*, pp. 59, 151).—Herrmann, in his earlier work, *Die Religion*, etc., took up a positive attitude to the bodily resurrection, though it is difficult to see on what ground he was able to do so (cf. pp. 386–7); but in later writings he lays at least no emphasis on the outward fact, if he still regards it as real. The essential matter is the conviction, born of our "impression" of the historical Christ, that He still lives and rules (cf. *Verkehr*, *passim*; Art. on *Religion und Socialdemokratie* in *Zeitschrift*, 1891, etc.).—Lobstein, of Strassburg, follows Herrmann, but with more positive rejection of the bodily resurrection. The question of the "how" of the appearances to the disciples is, on the ground of the existing testimonies, "insoluble" (Art. on *Der evang. Heilsglaube an die Auferstehung Jesu Christi*, in *Zeitschrift*, 1892, p. 364).—Schultz does not apparently admit the physical miracle, but affirms a "glorification" of Christ (*Dogmatik*, p. 109; *Gottheit Christi*, pp. 411, 696–7, etc.).—Wendt likewise rejects a literal resurrection. The words of Jesus on this subject "directly conveyed only the thought that Jesus would after the briefest delay be awakened from death to the heavenly life with God" (*Die Lehre Jesu*, ii., p. 543; E. T., ii., p. 266).—Harnack declares that "every conception which represents the resurrection of Christ as a simple resurrection of His mortal body is far

from the original conception," and holds that "history gives not the least cause for the assumption that Jesus did not continue in the grave." "Faith has by no means to do with the knowledge of the form in which Jesus lives, but only with the conviction that He is the living Lord" (*Dogmengeschichte*, i., pp. 75 (E. T., i., 87). The outcome is that the Ritschlian theologians wish to hold by a "truth of faith" in the resurrection of Christ—viz., a conviction of His abiding life, based on the estimate of His religious worth, but in the main they question the fact of the bodily resurrection, or at least do not regard it as an article of faith.

We may be grateful for the earnest note of faith in a living Lord frequently uttered by the writers of this school, but it is impossible not to feel how subjective and insecure is the basis of that faith, when cut off from its positive foundation in the historically-attested fact.

Passing to the sphere of theology proper, we have to notice next a considerable unanimity among the members of this school in regard to the idea of *the theological system*, and the place given to Christ's great central conception of *the Kingdom of God*. In these respects also the party approves itself genuinely Ritschlian. Theology is separated (ostensibly) from metaphysics, but it is not denied that there is, or ought to be, a theological system—a "new dogma"—which is to replace the old.* Less is done than might be wished to give shape to this new dogma, but it is at least recognised as a desideratum. In quite the Ritschlian manner, Herrmann declares in his work on

* Cf. Kaftan's *Brauchen wir ein neues Dogma?* and art. on *Glaube und Dogmatik*, in *Zeitschrift*, 1891.

Religion that "the certainty of faith always adheres to the totality of a Christian view of the world (*Ganzen christlicher Weltanschauung*), the practical appropriation of which brings the personal spirit to its peace," and declares that "in the theological proof each single member of the view of the world must receive its justification through the evidence of the whole." * Later, Herrmann somewhat resiles from this position, and appears to leave it to each individual to develop his theology in his own fashion.† Harnack, on the other hand, expresses himself with growing positiveness in the successive editions of his *History*. "The intellectual element," he says, "within the Christian religion belongs to the essence of the thing itself, inasmuch as this not only awakens feeling, but has a quite definite content which determines and should determine the feeling. In this sense, Christianity without dogma, that is, without a clear expression of its content, is inconceivable." ‡ The need of system, then, is generally recognised, and the Ritschlian writers are further of one mind in accepting as the controlling thought of that system the Christian idea of the Kingdom of God. Ritschl's doctrine of the twofold end is allowed to drop out of view,§ and the Kingdom

* *Die Religion*, Preface.

† *Verkehr*, pp. 6–12 (E. T., pp. 8–13 ; but cf. p. 185). See remarks in Reischle's art. in *Zeitschrift*, 1897, pp. 227 ff.

‡ *Eng. Trans.*, p. 21 (as against Sabatier). Cf. *Grundriss*, i., p. 1. "So far as the God and Father of Jesus Christ is believed in as the Almighty Lord of heaven and earth, the Christian religion includes a definite knowledge of God, of the world, and of the world-aim."

§ The distinction of religion and morality is indeed

of God becomes with them the comprehensive notion under which the whole of theology is brought. But difference emerges again when the question is put—what *is* the Kingdom of God? Herrmann comes nearest, perhaps, to Ritschl in such a definition as the following—"The Kingdom of God was to Jesus the sovereignty of God in the inner life of personal beings, and in their communion one with the other. The members of the Kingdom of God, as Jesus understood it, are those men who are fully subject to God through boundless confidence in Him and unbounded love for their neighbour."* Ritschl, as we saw, viewed this Kingdom exclusively under its earthly aspect. Wendt, more correctly, sees in the Kingdom a present, developing reality whose perfection lies in the future.† But Kaftan, with others of the school, regard it as wholly a thing of the "beyond." "The Kingdom of God," he says, "is supra-mundane; as a Kingdom of glory, it belongs to the beyond and the future."‡ What Ritschl designates the Kingdom of God on earth, Kaftan regards as the moral preparation for the Kingdom—"the inwardly indispensable means for its realisation."§ In antithesis to Ritschl, there-

emphasised, but the idea of the Kingdom of God is regarded as the unity of both. Cf. Kaftan, *Das Wesen*, pp. 239 ff.

* *Verkehr*, p. 68 (E. T., p. 72).

† *Die Lehre Jesu*, ii., p. 603 ff (E. T., ii., pp. 340 ff.).

‡ *Das Wesen*, p. 313.

§ Cf. *Die Wahrheit*, p. 547 (E. T., ii., p. 379). "That Kingdom can by no means be identified with the universal moral society which is being developed in the world, and in which all men are united by the law of love. As the chief good . . . it is supramundane and invisible, the Kingdom of perfection belonging to the future, heavenly world." In *Das*

fore, he transfers the spring of the Christian life and hope into the invisible world—connects it, not with the historical, but with the exalted, Christ. His key-text is, "Your life is hid with Christ in God." * Somewhat similar is the position taken up by J. Weiss, Ritschl's son-in-law. "In the speech and mode of thought of Jesus, world and Kingdom of God are absolutely irreconcilable opposites; the world must perish that the Kingdom of God may find place." † He proceeds, however, to apply the idea, "not in the sense of the Evangelists, but in the significant change of meaning it has received in modern theology." ‡ Still, like Kaftan, he advocates a return to the thought of "the exalted Christ." § What he means by this we shall afterwards see.

Probably the surest test of the unity of a school is the attitude taken by its members to the *Christological* question; and here again the Ritschlian theologians manifest a singular unanimity. At one with Ritschl in their rejection of what they call the "metaphysical" aspects of Christ's Person, they agree in their estimate

Wesen, p. 211, he combats the view that Christ's teaching had reference to a Kingdom on earth.

* Col. iii. 3. Cf. Kaftan's Sermons entitled *Das Leben in Christo*; and see *Das Wesen*, p. 230. This is the "mystical" element in Kaftan.

† *Die Nachfolge Christo*, p. 168; cf. his *Die Pred. Jesu vom Reiche Gottes.*

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

§ Pp. 147-8. "Could we," he says, "reawaken in our churches this temper, our connection with the origins of our religion would be secured. I say 'reawaken,' for I think that this form of life has become lost in very wide circles."

of Jesus as One who stood in a unique relation to both God and man—the perfect Revelation of God in humanity, the Founder of His Kingdom, and the Reconciler of man to God. With them, as with Ritschl, the "Godhead" of Christ is not a determination of essence, but an expression of religious "value." Christ has the value of Deity for us because He is the perfect Revelation of God. In words of Herrmann—"The Deity of Christ can only be expressed by saying that the mind and will of the everlasting God stand before us in the historically active will of this man."* Or, as Kaftan puts it, "Who knows Him, knows God. He is God revealed in flesh, *i.e.*, among men. . . . The perfect Revelation of God in the world."† Or, again, as Schultz, in his special work on this subject, unequivocally states it—he is God to us only as the bearer of the Revelation of God."‡ The constitution of this

* *Verkehr*, p. 143 (E. T., p. 138 ; cf. p. 30).

† *Das Wesen*, p. 310. In his *Brauchen wir*, etc., p. 58, Kaftan speaks as if he recognised something transcendental in the Person of Christ, and was breaking through the Ritschlian circle. "We know not," he says, "how we can call a man 'God'—the word is too great and weighty—if we do not truly mean that the Eternal God has come to us in Him, and in Him converses with us. . . . Do we believe in the Godhead of the Lord, then we believe also in His origin from above, from God." But does this mean more than what we have in *Das Wesen*, p. 314—"He is the man in whom God caused the fulness of His eternal being to dwell, so that He is for us the image of the invisible God." A genuine faith in the Divinity of Christ is expressed, however, in the school of Häring, etc. Cf. passage quoted from Ziegler on p. 227. One is glad to think that this positive tendency is growing.

‡ *Gottheit d. Christi*, p. 696. He adds, "God is man only as revealing himself for us in Christ."

unique Person is a "mystery" not further to be investigated.* We are to turn from questions of pre-existence, Herrmann says, "with hearts cold as ice."† It is not easy to see, as formerly remarked, why, even on Ritschlian principles, this position need be maintained. What Ritschlianism tabooes as "metaphysical" is, on inspection, found to be often merely "transcendental." And it has already been pointed out that this theology, as little as any other, can get on without transcendental postulates.‡ God Himself is such a postulate. To explain the world, and man's place in it, a living, Personal, supramundane Cause and End of the cosmos is assumed. Why, then, should it be inadmissible to "postulate" what may be necessary to explain the Personality of Christ? If the term "metaphysical" is disliked, name it "a thought of faith." The "post-existence" of Christ, which all these writers assume, is as truly a transcendental thought as His pre-existence. Why, if there is call for it, should the latter be inadmissible, and the former not? We submit that if Christ is to be thought of as the divinely-glorified being whom the theories of Herrmann, Kaftan, Harnack, Schultz, J. Weiss, and the others suppose, even His earthly existence cannot be put within the frame of purely human conditions.§ It

* *Gottheit d. Christi*, p. 383.

† Address at Eisenach, October 1896. This ignores the fact that the raising of the question of pre-existence is not left to our own choice, but is forced upon us by sayings of Christ, and the drift of the teaching of the New Testament.

‡ See above, p. 196.

§ As hinted in a previous note, Herrmann formerly seemed conscious of this, and was disposed to postulate pre-existence.

needs transcendental factors to explain it—such factors as Christ's own deeper utterances would lead us to acknowledge.*

There are questions, however, in regard to this Revelation of God we are assumed to have in Christ which, without prying too curiously into the mode, cannot altogether be avoided. In light of the avowed principles of the school on the subject of the miraculous, and the ambiguity we saw formerly to attach to the concept of Revelation, we cannot help asking—Does Revelation even in Christ transcend the limits of the natural? Translated from the sphere of religious value-judging into that of sober, objective fact, does it mean more than this—that Christ possessed a unique spiritual endowment, in virtue of which there opened itself up to Him a new view of God and the world, in the strength of which He Himself lived, and the faith of which He was able by the force of His spirit to impart to others? The exalted language of the Ritschlians about Christ, and their unambiguous recognition of His sinlessness,† might

"I have certainly the conviction," he said, "that faith in Christ was led in a natural process to the representation of a pre-existence of Christ, and indeed of a personal, and not an ideal pre-existence. The assumption of an ideal pre-existence seems to me unjustified. . . . Faith is led to this, to regard the Redeemer, whom it knows as the Revelation of God, as pre-existent."—*Die Religion*, p. 449.

* John vi. 62; viii. 14, 58; xvii. 5, etc.

† It does not follow that because the Ritschlians affirm the sinlessness of Christ, they would admit the impossibility of such an individual arising in humanity within the natural order. They would view the appearance of such an individual as teleologically provided for.

seem to preclude such a supposition; but there are considerations of weight on the other side. We remember how Ritschl resents the notion of any direct, unmediated intercourse between the soul and God, and in his theory of knowledge denies the possibility of such; how at least an important section of his school declines to affirm any position in religion which conflicts with the assumption of an unbroken order of causation in nature; how, on this ground, the supernatural birth of Jesus, and His bodily resurrection, are rejected. But we have hints also which would seem to suggest that, however great the worth of the Revelation of Jesus, it does not imply an origin outside of, or transcending, the inherent laws of the human spirit.* Herrmann, *e.g.*, in discussing miracle, always goes on the assumption that every event, however wonderful, is naturally mediated.† Schultz takes the same position in his dogmatic works.‡ We would not press this too far,

* An exception must again be made of Kaftan, and those like-minded with him, by whom the supernatural character of the Revelation of Christ is strongly affirmed.—*Das Wesen*, p. 307. But even Kaftan leaves us in ambiguity when he extends "Revelation" to all religions, and says—"A religion is true in so far as it rests on Revelation" (pp. 174, 175).

† "For us," he says, "each miracle (*Wunder*) of God is to a measureless extent naturally mediated. God works through nature, which He has created as means for His final end."—*Die Religion*, p. 386.

‡ "The natural conditions of the origin of a human personality are (in Christ's case) in no wise affected. . . . For the religious view of the world, all natural conditions and powers come into consideration only as serviceable material for the aim of God in His creation of the world, never as contradictory of the latter, and requiring in a mundane respect to

but it does seem to point to a view according to which the Person and Revelation of Christ, while conceived of as lying in the plan of the world, and realising a purpose of God, still, just as in the theories of Pfleiderer and Lipsius, does not fall beyond the scope of natural conditions.* If this is *not* the view of these writers, their system cannot easily be cleared of the charge of radical incoherency.†

In general agreement with the views of Ritschl, further, though with considerable divergence in detail, are the teachings of his school on the subjects of *sin and salvation*. Sin, as in Ritschl's theology, is judged of under the Gospel by the standard of the Kingdom of God. It is not the result of a "Fall," but arises inevitably from the empirical conditions under which man was created.‡ Man stands naturally under the law of the "flesh," *i.e.*, is ruled by self-seeking and sensuous impulses and desires.§ His natural state, therefore, is necessarily sinful. Kaftan follows out

be changed or set aside, in order that divine ends may be realised."—*Gottheit d. Christi*, p. 383. Cf. *Grundriss d. Dogmatik*, p. 106. "The wonderful and unique endowment of Jesus must be sought in the domain of religious and moral capabilities (*Anlagen*)," etc.

* Schultz quite properly recognises the affinity of his views to those of Schleiermacher, Schweizer, Lipsius, etc.—Pref. to *Gottheit*.

† An immediate Revelation of God to the soul of Christ would come under the ban of mysticism, and would be exposed to all the philosophical objections which Ritschl urges against the view that God and the soul can come directly together.

‡ Kaftan, *Das Wesen*, p. 251 ; Schultz, *Dogmatik*, p. 61.

§ *Das Wesen*, pp. 254–5 ; Schultz holds that according to the Book of Genesis and St. Paul sin as "Fleischlichkeit" inhered

this thought in a line of his own. Though the natural man is sinful, he is not therefore guilty.* Guilt is only imputed where there is knowledge.† Sin is measured by the absolute standard of the divine law; guilt by the relative standard of the knowledge of the divine will.‡ While, therefore, there can be hereditary sin, there can be no inherited guilt.§ Sin is imputed only where there is knowledge, and only as imputed is it the object of the forgiveness revealed and guaranteed in Christ.‖ Kaftan thus reaches a position in some respects the opposite of Ritschl's, viz., that only sins done with *knowledge* are pardonable.¶ Kaftan and Schultz do more justice than Ritschl to the judicial righteousness of God, and to the reality of the divine wrath.** Both speak strongly of "the eternal death"—"the second death"—with a leaning, apparently, like Ritschl, to the hypothesis of annihilation.††

in man before the fall, and prompted the sinful act.—*Dogmatik* p. 61.

* Sin and guilt, he holds, are to be sharply distinguished.—*Das Wesen*, pp. 259, 271.

† P. 257.

‡ Pp. 249, 271.

§ P. 260. The school generally parts with Ritschl in his denial of hereditary vices.

‖ Pp. 257–8.

¶ This position of Kaftan's is untenable. If sin is not imputable, it is not really sin. If it is really *sin*, it is imputable, and there is a measure of guilt. Schultz recognises the universality of guilt, as of sin; but holds that merely "human guilt," *i.e.*, guilt springing from natural conditions, without clear knowledge, "cannot yet condition the (final) judgment" (p. 67).

** Kaftan, pp. 272–4; Schultz, pp. 41, 69.

†† Kaftan, p. 273; Schultz, pp. 70, 154. Cf. on this subject

A similar consensus exists in regard to the main features of the doctrine of *salvation.* The primary need of man in his relations to God is held to be the assurance of the forgiveness of his sins, with the accompanying disclosure of the nature of his true good. Both are given in the personal manifestation of God's grace in Christ, and in His preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom.* Herrmann, in this connection, lays special stress on the overmastering impression of the holiness and love of God which we receive from the character and life of Jesus—an impression which doubts as to the details of the Gospel history can do nothing to annul. Through Jesus we have the irrefragable certainty that God is present to us, and communes with us—" a God so holy that He at once strikes down the sinner, and yet also forgives him, and reconciles him to himself by his own act " †—and thus are raised to the consciousness of forgiveness, and are enabled to yield ourselves to the service of God's Kingdom.‡ It is nevertheless not the teaching of

of sin and guilt, and on the notion of the divine wrath, two interesting papers of Ziegler on *Die ethische Versöhnungslehre* in the *Zeitschrift* for 1895. With Ziegler, also, the wrath of God is an eschatological conception, and issues in the annihilation of the obdurate (pp. 25, 35). This idea of annihilation has a certain fascination for the members of the school.

* " In the preaching of Jesus," says Kaftan, " the forgiveness of sins is the removal of the hindrance which exists in human guilt for the kingdom of God proclaimed by Him."—*Das Wesen*, p. 276.

† *Verkehr*, p. 23 (E. T., p. 26).

‡ Pp. 77-9, 96, 112 (E. T., pp. 79-81, 97, 111). J. Weiss, in his *Nachfolge Christi*, pp. 137-47, thinks Herrmann too individualistic and exclusive in his view, and contrasts him with

these writers that this forgiveness flows to us as a matter of course from the gracious character of God. "To every one who really experiences it," Herrmann declares, "forgiveness comes as an astounding revelation of love." * "It is always," says Kaftan, "an unfathomable decree of the love of God that He was willing to reconcile sinners to Himself in Christ, without and contrary to their desert. . . . For the conscience would judge that guilt excludes us from participation in the Kingdom of God." † In various ways, also, they recognise a connection between Christ's sufferings and death and the forgiveness of sins, and

Ritschl. Ritschl's biographer also notices the variations from Ritschl in the later form of Herrmann's theology.—*Leben*, ii., p. 461. Cf. O. Ritschl in *Zeitschrift*, 1897, p, 177. How, indeed, would Herrmann, on his theory of personal impression from the historical Christ, account for the conversion of Paul?

* *Verkehr*, p. 205 (E. T., p.194). Herrmann regards it as "the grossest misrepresentation of Ritschl's theology that has yet been made" to say that "divine forgiveness goes without saying, because we have learned that God is love" (p. 103). If, however, this means more than that, without the Christian Revelation, we should not have been able to believe in forgiveness, it is not easy to see where the misrepresentation comes in. For God, in Ritschl's theology, is love and nothing else. How, then, should He not forgive? What is there to hinder forgiveness? Or rather, what place is there for forgiveness where there is no displeasure at sin, or condemnation of it? Does Herrmann or Kaftan mean that it might have been just in God to have left the race—sinning, as Ritschl holds, in ignorance—to perish eternally for lack of a forgiveness it was in His power to bestow? Or is the meaning simply that Ritschl held forgiveness to be conditioned by a moral change in the sinner—the acceptance of God's end—and in this sense is not something to be counted on by all?

† *Die Wahrheit*, p. 554 (E. T., ii. p. 389).

admit that such a connection is established more or less directly in Christ's own words.* But standpoints and interpretations on this subject differ widely. Herrmann, *e.g.*, even finds a germ of truth in the older satisfaction doctrine, and speaks of Jesus as, while dispensing forgiveness, "at the same time consciously working to establish the inviolable justice of God's moral order." † This thought, however, is not further developed, and does not stand in any recognisable connection with the general trend of Herrmann's teaching. It is an "erratic block" in a system of quite different context. Kaftan, on the other hand, lays the stress, not on the death, but on the resurrection, and "the death comes into consideration only as the transition to the glorified life." ‡ He finds the doctrine of Paul lacking in consistency, and the death of Christ has for him, generally, only the significance of a "Revelation of the Divine love." § Wendt acknowledges, again, that Christ attributed a saving significance to His death, but does not believe

* Cf. on this Harnack's *Dogmengeschichte*, i., pp. 59–60 (with add. note in E. T., p. 66); p. 73 (E. T., p. 83).

† *Verkehr*, pp. 103–8 (E. T., *do.*).

‡ *Das Wesen*, p. 230. He does not here attach to the death of Christ much theological importance of any kind. These views stand also in 2nd edition (1888); but in a later review of Häring in *Theol. Lit.-Ztg.* (1894) he speaks much more positively of the need of conserving the thought of representation, and even of "substitutionary penal suffering" (*Stellvertretendes Strafleiden*) as an element contained in the catholic doctrine of satisfaction. So earlier (1879) in a Sermon on "Christ hath redeemed us," etc. This is another "erratic block" we find it difficult to account for.

§ P. 280.

that He connected it directly with the forgiveness of sins.* His obedience, ratified by His death, availed "as an actually operative motive for God to ratify His gracious will in the case of His disciples." † The Church, however, was justified in giving it a reference to forgiveness in the sense that "men assailed with the consciousness of their sins obtain through the death of Jesus a strengthened assurance of the sin-forgiving grace of God." ‡ The weakness of most of these theories, from the evangelical point of view, lies in their ignoring of the propitiatory element (*Sühne*) which is so prominent in the New Testament; and this defect is sought to be met in the theories of Häring, Kähler, and others of the more positive section of the school. § Häring has a theory not

* *Die Lehre Jesu*, ii., p. 522 (E. T., ii., p. 241): "Jesus Himself has neither in the words of the Supper, nor elsewhere, expressed this special reference of the saving significance of His death for the benefit of the forgiveness of sins."

† *Ibid.*, p. 526 (E. T., ii., p. 246). He explains by God's promise to reward with mercy to thousands the faithfulness of those who kept the covenant. How much more will He "superabundantly repay, with blessing to thousands, nay, to all the members of the community of His Kingdom, the perfect obedience of His Son," p. 521 (E. T., ii., p. 239). He thus interprets the meaning of Christ's death as a "ransom": "He teaches them through His example to rise in pious humility and certainty of salvation above death, and so to change death from being a fearful tyrant into a means of salvation" (p. 515). This, he says, coincides in essentials with the explanation of Ritschl.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 522 (E. T., ii., p. 241).

§ Cf. Häring's *Das Bleibende im Glauben an Christus* (1880), but specially his *Zur Versöhnungslehre* (1893); and Kähler's *Die Versöhnung durch Christus*, etc. (1885)

unlike Dr. J. McLeod Campbell's, and finds the objective element in Christ's atonement in His perfect realisation and acknowledgment of the evil of sin, and in His furnishing to God a security that all who believe in Him will also realise the normal relation to God.* K. Ziegler is in close agreement with Häring and Kähler in his "ethical" view of atonement.† Little use is made by the school generally of the peculiar Pauline terminology—justification, etc., which is regarded as shaped in antithesis to Pharisaic modes of thought;‡ but J. Weiss gives prominence to the idea of the representation of believers before God in Christ—a feature of the Ritschlian theology to which he thinks little justice has been done, even by Ritschl's nearest scholars.§ He admits, however, that Ritschl uses the formula of "the imputation of Christ's merit" only in an "Umdeutung"—a changed sense—on the principle formerly explained that love given to one is extended

* On Häring's theory see Dorner, *Syst. of Doct.*, iv., p. 72 (E. T.). His view, briefly, is that God only forgives on condition of an infinite feeling of contrition and abhorrence of evil, and this Christ rendered. This view has since been modified, with greater approximation to the ordinary doctrine.

† See his able articles on *Die ethische Versöhnungslehre*, in *Zeitschrift* for 1895, His discussion embraces the doctrines of sin and guilt as well as of atonement. Death, in his view, is a punishment of sin, but only because contemplated in light of "the abstract possibility of an ideal, sinless development of the whole of humanity" (p. 37), which yet does not correspond with the actual facts of man's origin. Here, again, we are working with illusive "value-judgments."

‡ Cf. Kaftan, *Das Wesen*, pp. 278–79, 284.

§ *Die Nachfolge Christi*, p. 122.

to persons intimately related to him, and, in the case of an injured party, may move to the forgiveness of the person who has done the injury.* Schultz also gives a leading place to this idea of representation.†

The difficulty we met within Ritschl about the twofold end in justification and sanctification does not arise among the members of his school, by whom the forgiveness of sins is regarded directly as the removal of hindrances to the fulfilment of the *moral tasks* of the Kingdom of God. The supreme support of Christian life within the Kingdom of God is, as with Ritschl, faith in the Fatherly providence of God, and complete submission to His loving will.‡ This would have value if it involved belief in an actual, objective shaping of the course of providence with a view to the ends of the believer's life. It does not, in fact, seem, as before observed, to carry us much further than the

* *Die Nachfolge Christi*, pp. 122–4. The person originally loved is supposed to be a "Burgschaft," or security for the other—*i.e.*, warrants him to be a person not unworthy of favour. But is not this to bring back justification to something in personal character?

† Cf. *Dogmatik*, p. 118. "In the reconciling work of Christ," he says further, "we have to do not with a juridical satisfaction, or substitutionary endurance of punishment, but with the moral category of substitutionary suffering, whose central point is redeeming sympathy, which knows no blessedness without the salvation of the loved one." Häring would subordinate the idea of representation to that of Revelation.—*Zur Versöhnungslehre* (pp. 39 ff.).

‡ The Christian view of the world is summed up by Kaftan comprehensively thus: "that the world is perfectly dependent on God, and that He orders everything in it in accordance with the end of His holy love."—*Das Wesen*, p. 393.

conviction that the world as a whole is created for the end of the Kingdom of God, and that whatever happens to the child of God is always for the best—*i.e.* can be *made* into the best by his spirit of faith and submission.* Prayer, for instance, helps us, according to Herrmann, not by any objective influence, but because the confidence it calls forth takes away the burden from our souls.† He is at one with Ritschl also in the view that certainty of forgiveness is attainable only by the habitual life of faith. One would have thought from his insistence on the power of the impression of the historical Christ that the certainty of forgiveness would be regarded as springing up naturally and involuntarily at the very commencement of the Christian life. He holds the opinion, however, which he attributes also to the Reformers, "that we are certain that God forgives our sins only when we submit ourselves to the operations of the gracious God with confidence in His help for every situation in life." ‡ This makes certainty of salvation depend, in the last resort, on the degree of our faith in providence—a position doubly dubious when it is remembered that, on his theory, our only right to trust the providence of God is our confidence that we are children of God, and members of His Kingdom.§

* Cf. Schultz, *Dogmatik*, p. 38.

† *Verkehr*, p. 268 (E. T., p. 248).

‡ P. 201 (E. T., p. 192).

§ In this connection it should be observed that the Ritschlian writers generally do not, any more than Ritschl, teach a universal Fatherhood of God. God is the Father of those who are admitted to His fellowship in His kingdom. Schultz, *e.g.*, lays down the positions that (1) every natural man

In accordance with the views entertained by Ritschl, most of the members of his school show a strong *anti-mystical* bias, though other tendencies are also to be noticed. Herrmann is the writer who stands nearest to Ritschl in this respect. In his striking book on *Communion with God* he advocates the view —thus at least we are compelled to understand him * —that the only way God draws near to and communes with men is through the fact of the historical appearance of Jesus Christ. An immediate action of God upon the soul such as is affirmed in the ordinary doctrine of the enlightening, awakening, regenerating, and sanctifying operations of the Spirit—any fellowship of the soul with God, therefore, other than is implied in the impression made on us by Christ's historical manifestation—is repudiated as mystical.† It is involved in faith, indeed, so Herrmann holds, that the love and care of God, and His interest in our

possesses the capacity to become a member of the Kingdom of God; (2) no natural man as such is a member of the Kingdom of God. Our destination is from being children of this earth to be made into children of God in Christ.—*Dogmatik*, pp. 51-2. J. Weiss, however, will not maintain that in *no* sense are Hindoos or Negroes children of God. "Only about that we know nothing positively."—*Die Nachfolge*, p. 127.

* See note below.

† It is difficult to know what Herrmann would make, say, of the events of Pentecost. Harnack, in his *Dogmengeschichte*, cannot, on the other hand, be accused of undervaluing the place of the Spirit in the early Church. Cf. pp. 47, 68 (E. T., pp. 50, 80, where see enlarged note—"the Spirit as a possession, principle, of the new supernatural life, and of holiness"). The school generally, however, has no proper doctrine of the Spirit.

welfare, is abiding; that the exalted Lord figured by faith as "perfected, and freed from all earthly limits," is aware of "how near we have come to Him, or how far we are from Him"; that "the Lord, who has overcome, is still with us with all His human sympathies." * But there is no immediate communion, no direct, or, at the least, conscious contact of His spirit with ours. "Of a communion with the exalted Christ there can be no mention." † In the glow of his faith in the exalted Christ, Herrmann almost breaks the bounds of his Ritschlianism, and certainly rises himself to a sufficiently mystical height of utterance.‡ But he stops short at the point of direct communion. It is otherwise with Kaftan, who, as already observed, lays all the stress on the exalted Christ, and the reality of spiritual communion—on the life "hid with Christ in God." § J. Weiss, too, directly reverses Herrmann's

* *Verkehr*, p. 237 (E. T., p. 222).

† P. 238.

‡ By a curious irony Herrmann himself is accused by J. Weiss of falling into the error of the mystics.—*Die Nachfolge Christi*, p. 146. Herrmann's doctrine of the exalted Christ, "freed from all earthly limits," etc., involves a tremendous assumption if regarded as a mere deduction of faith. It is an assumption for which there is no secure basis in his theory. In any case, held as seriously as he holds it, it should lead to a reconstruction of his conception of Christ. A Being thus exalted passes the limits of humanity. Ritschl could not have followed Herrmann in these transcendent flights.

§ *Das Wesen*, pp. 230, 239; *Die Wahrheit*, p. 252 (E. T., i., p. 339): "It is correct that in Christian piety we seek communion with the divine Spirit and life, and are aware that we can find blessedness only in this direct communion; that on the heights of the inner world of faith all thought of any kind of mediation vanishes." Cf. on this subject Reischle's

dictum, and says, "Even Christ has become to us, to this age, a distant historical appearance. The sole means of removing this impression is a powerful and immediate faith in, and communion with, the exalted One." * But this writer's conception of what faith in the exalted Christ implies, and of the significance of the idea for the guidance of the Church, presents some curious results.†

Note on Herrmann's "Verkehr."—The view that Herrmann does not deny a direct access of God to the soul, but means only to affirm that all spiritual action of God in the soul is mediated by the historical Revelation will not, we believe, be borne out by a careful study of his volume. If this were all, there would be no reason for the warmth of his polemic against Frank, Luthardt, etc., who would not dream of disputing the general dependence of the work of the Spirit on that of Christ, as affirmed in John xvi. 14, 15. Herrmann's opponents, and the critics of his own school, understand him as we do; his principles, indeed, are only the carrying out

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Ueber die Mystik in der Theologie, which seeks to mediate between the different standpoints.

* *Die Nachfolge Christi*, p. 153.

† He means by placing ourselves under the exalted Christ that we are to think of what Christ would say and do now were He among us under the new conditions of society (pp. 164, 171). Not a little of the teaching of the historical Christ would, he imagines, require reversal, and even correction. Here is one passage—"No one can tell whether to-day He would appear in the guise of a wandering preacher, or in the coat of the artisan, or as a statesman, or scholar, or even as field-general. Just as little dare we maintain that He would have nothing else to say than the Sermon on the Mount. On the contrary, He would quite certainly be the most modern of all men, and would speak as no one we had ever yet heard, in quite new thoughts and words" (p. 167).

of those of Ritschl.—Since the publication of his *Verkehr*, Herrmann has been subjected to a good deal of adverse criticism by Kähler, J. Weiss, O. Ritschl, Troeltsch, and others, of his own general way of thinking. The points of criticism are such as the following:—The attempt to separate the Christ of the Gospels from the Christ of the Apostolic preaching; the representation of that as an immediate impression of the historical Christ which is really mediated to us by the Gospel testimony, the faith of the living Church, and the thought and atmosphere of our existing spiritual environment; his too narrow view of the origin of faith; the failure to give a due place to Christ as risen and exalted in relation to the life of the Church; on the part of O. Ritschl—the attempt to base faith in a historical fact on grounds which are altogether independent of historical judgment. This last criticism is exceptionally important, as showing that the school is becoming alive to the impossibility of separating "faith-judgments" from ordinary scientific and historical investigations.—See the criticism of Kähler (of 1st edit.) in his *Der sogenannte historische Jesus*, etc. (1892); of J. Weiss in the work already mentioned, *Die Nachfolge Christi*, 1895; of O. Ritschl in art. on *Der geschichtliche Christus*, in *Zeitschrift*, 1893; of Troeltsch in arts. in *Zeitschrift*, 1895-6, referred to below. Herrmann replied to Kähler in art. on *Der geschichtliche Christus*, in *Zeitschrift*, 1892; and the different positions are reviewed by Reischle in art. on *Die Begründung des Glaubens*, etc., in *Zeitschrift*, 1897.

Ritschl's doctrine of the *Church* receives little development at the hands of the Ritschlian writers. From several passages in Herrmann we gather that the immediate impression of the historical Christ which works faith in us is, after all, understood by him to be "in a thousand ways" mediated to us by the community of believers—the Church.* Nay,

* *Verkehr*, p. 155 (E. T., p. 149).

God "can open His inner self only to such as are in the Church, *i.e.*, in the fellowship of such as trust Him.* This is an important qualification of the "immediateness," and the difficulty of reconciling Herrmann's utterances on this subject of the relation of the believer to Christ and to the Church, is well pointed out by J. Weiss in the work above cited, † and by O. Ritschl.‡ None of the writers goes so far as Ritschl's doctrine of the justification of the community. The Sacraments are regarded as outward pledges of God's love to us in Christ, and of our standing in the community.

The school also, as was to be anticipated, maintains great reserve on *Eschatology*. Its writers give more prominence than Ritschl did to a final perfected and glorified state of the Kingdom of God§; and many of them, as we have seen, lay emphasis on the present exalted life of Christ. Herrmann confidently anticipates a time when we shall see Christ "otherwise than in the mirror of history, and with other eyes than those looking out from the midst of the earthly struggle."‖ Little is made of the eschatological discourses of Jesus, which, Wendt thinks, express simply the idea "of the continuance of His Messianic significance in the Kingdom of God in spite of His death."¶ The Second Advent, in Schultz's view,

* P. 152 (E. T., p. 147). Cf. the whole passage, pp. 152–62.
† *Die Nachfolge Christi*, pp. 137 ff.
‡ Art. *Der gesch. Christus*, in *Zeitschrift*, 1893, pp. 388–93.
§ Thus Kaftan, Bornemann, Schultz, etc.
‖ *Verkehr*, p. 140 (E. T., p. 122).
¶ *Die Lehre Jesus*, ii., p. 556 (E. T., ii., p. 283).

does not belong to Dogmatics.* There is general concurrence in the idea that those who finally resist the Divine purpose will undergo "the second death." † As illustrating the more positive note that is sometimes struck, we may cite the following sentences from Ziegler: "He will come at last as Judge of the quick and dead to perfect His Kingdom. Now do we finally understand why this man Jesus is called 'true God,' 'born of the Father in eternity.' . . . . The work of Christ, of which we see upon the earth only a weak beginning, is the work of God. It reaches forward and backward into eternity. A mere man cannot work through the whole creation. Only one Man can do that, who is one with God Himself, who has come forth from God as the Son of God, and goes to God, while He leads all His own with Him—to God." ‡

The brevity of this sketch has made it impossible to do more than touch on points in the views of the more prominent representatives of the new theology. The tendency of the younger generation has been to abate somewhat the exclusive tone of the older Ritschlians, and to acknowledge the services of other theologians of the mediating and liberal types §—

* *Dogmatik*, p. 152.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 70, 154; Kaftan, *Das Wesen*, pp. 273–4; Ziegler, in *Zeitschrift*, 1895, pp. 25, 35, etc.

‡ In *Zeitschrift*, 1895, p. 227.

§ Thus earlier Kattenbusch and Schultz. The latter freely acknowledges his essential agreement with Schleiermacher, Schweizer, Lipsius, Beyschlag, Rückert, as well as Ritschl

hardly yet of the "old orthodox." With this has gone the accentuation of internal differences in the school, the result being, as we have seen, widely divergent standpoints. Specially noteworthy in this connection is a remarkable series of papers by Troeltsch, a pupil of Ritschl's, in the *Zeitschrift* of the party, on "The Relation of the Christian View of the World to Counter-Tendencies in Science" (1893-4), and on "The Independence of Religion" (1895). In a criticism which embraces all the leading representatives, this writer assails the "subjectivity" of the Ritschlian school, and practically separates himself from its self-enclosed attitude in regard to external knowledge. We cannot ignore the question, he says, of "how our (Christian) experience and the view of the world which goes along with it are related to facts known to us in other ways."* We have not thought it necessary to dwell on the older "Bender,"

(Pref. to *Gottheit*). So Ziegler, in article above cited, owns his obligations to Rothe, C. J. Nitzsch, Gess, Kühl, Kähler, etc.

* *Zeitschrift*, 1893, p. 494. In a later article, 1895, p. 375, he says of the Ritschlian procedure: "To apply to non-Christian religions the Feuerbachian theory, and to the Christian religion, on the other hand, the supernaturalistic theory of Revelation, is an exceedingly hazardous experiment." And in 1896, p. 91: "I should not think, of course, of ignoring the considerable merits of the neo-Kantian theologians; I should like only to bring it about that the younger generation of theologians should earnestly examine the presuppositions taken over (along with myself) from the Ritschl school, and should see in its fatal sceptical subjectivism the ground of so many serious peculiarities of this theology." Kaftan replies to Troeltsch in an article on *Die Selbstständigkeit des Christenthums* in same volume, 1896.

or the more recent "Apostolicum" controversies in the school *—the latter bearing partly on the obligations of creed-subscription, but largely also on the history of the symbol, and on the place of the Virgin-birth in the belief of the primitive Church. Its historical results have not been without value.† Not a little discussion has taken place also in the organs of the school on the use of the Scriptures—specially of the Old Testament—in education. It is obvious that the isolating of the Revelation in Christ from earlier Revelation, which is the tendency, *e.g.*, in Herrmann, co-operating with the results of criticism, could not but tend to a depreciation of the Old Testament,‡ and lead to protests, in turn, from the more moderate adherents of the party. This is what happened in 1894, when a warm discussion was carried on in the pages of *Die christliche Welt.* One writer published an article entitled "The Old Testament has no place in Christian Education."

* The literature of both controversies can be fully seen in Nippold. The bare lists occupy several pages.

† Among the chief writers are Harnack, Kattenbusch, Cremer, Herrmann, Achelis, Bornemann, Zöckler, Zahn; but there is a multitude more.

‡ It was far from clear in the 1st edition of Herrmann's *Verkehr* what place was left for Revelation in the Old Testament, or indeed anywhere, except in Christ. In the 2nd edition Herrmann seeks to remove the objection made to him on this score by saying that though the pious Israelite had no doubt communion with God, "the facts which wrought on him as Revelations of God have no more this power for us."—P. 49 (this sentence is omitted in E. T., p. 52). Mark the subjectivity of the expression: "wrought" on him as "Revelations": not necessarily as being *really* so."

Christianity, he held, maintains the same relation to Judaism that it does to heathenism. "It is high time that the prophetic Messiah mantle be taken from the shoulders of the exalted Christ, that we may be able to see the Son of Man in all His glory."* Others concede that the historical portions cannot be used with much profit, but claim that this is not true of the prophetical and poetical parts. More conservative voices also make themselves heard. Such discussions can only result in creating by recoil a stronger sense of the unity of divine Revelation, and of the need of greater caution in the handling of the Old Testament records.

* *C. W.*, 1894, No. 18.

CHAPTER VIII

GENERAL SURVEY—THE RITSCHLIAN THEOLOGY AND THE EVANGELICAL FAITH

Good Features in Ritschlianism—Relation to the Spirit of the Age—Nevertheless Inadmissible as a Substitute for the Older Evangelical Faith—Futility of its Claim to be uninfluenced by Philosophy and Science—Its Theory of Knowledge—"Metaphysic" and "Theoretic Thought": Ambiguity of Terms—Impossibility of Divorce of Religion and Theoretic Thought—Theory of "Value-Judging"—In what sense Religion involves "Value-Judgments"—Nature of the "Judgment of Value"—"Judgments of Value" and Scientific Judgments not Opposed—Ritschlian Subjectivism—Defects in Ritschlian Theory of Religion and Revelation—The Problem of Revelation in Christ—"Natural Theology"—The Teleological Conception of Christianity—Defects in Ritschlian Idea of God—"Love" the Abstraction of the Divine Purpose—Ritschlian View of the Divine Righteousness: its Inadequacy—Love and Law—Intrinsic Rightness of Divine Methods and Ends—Defects in Idea of the Kingdom of God—Its Abstract Character—Relation to Idea of Church—Modern Place of this Conception—Ritschlianism and the Primitive Gospel—Place of Death and Resurrection of Christ in the Latter—Doctrine of the Incarnation—Defects of Ritschlian treatment—Evangelical View in accordance with the Facts—Doctrine of Reconciliation—Ritschlian ignoring of "Propitiation"—Defects in Views of Sin and Redemption—Evangelical Doctrine of Atonement—Defects in Ritschlian View of Work of the Spirit and the New Life—Decline of Influence of the School—Evangelical Spirit underlying Differences—Conclusion.

WE are now in a position, at the end of this lengthened survey, to sum up rapidly the results of the theology we have been considering, and

to estimate its relation to what is usually described as the Evangelical Faith. We can readily recognise the many true thoughts which lie in the Ritschlian system, and the relative value of many of its characteristic contentions. It is true that religion has often suffered from the intrusion of philosophy; true that over-intellectualism, and the substitution of scholastic subtlety and elaboration for conceptions drawn from immediate contact with the Gospel facts, and from direct Christian experience, have been a bane and hindrance to the right apprehension of Christian truth. So far as Ritschlianism is a protest against this rationalising of Christianity, and an assertion of the right and duty of developing the Christian system from its own basis, its influence is wholesome. We can well understand, too, the desire felt by earnest teachers to find a way of presenting the Gospel which shall commend it to the mind and heart of an age in large measure alienated from its truths, and stumbled by its demand for faith in things which the modern view of the world is supposed to reject. The warmest supporters of the evangelical faith will agree, we believe, with the Ritschlians, in their desire to get back to the simplest elements of the Gospel in dealing with such an age; will be eager to approach it on every side by which access to mind and conscience is possible; will be glad to begin, if that is needful, at the very lowest round of the ladder, and to win men's faith by the most direct—the least dogmatic—presentation of Christ's character and message, in the hope that thereby they may lead them to the acknowledgment of something higher. But they will not feel that this elementary presentation of

the Gospel is adequate for the purposes of a theology which is to embrace the entire contents of the Christian faith; and they will doubt the wisdom, even for the end in view, of concealing from men those aspects of the Gospel which, in the judgment of an Apostle, constitute it peculiarly "the power of God unto salvation,"* or of minimising the gulf in principle which must always separate the believing from an unbelieving view of the world.†

We readily grant, also, the attraction of the teleological point of view from which Ritschlianism would have us regard the Christian religion, and the importance of many of the ideas brought forward in this connection. We welcome the amplitude of the Ritschlian way of conceiving of theology as an organic

* Rom. i. 16. Thus we are asked not only to disemburden our preaching of characteristic doctrines and facts of Christianity—doctrines of the Trinity, of the Incarnation, of the Atonement, facts of the miraculous conception, of the Gospel miracles, of Christ's Resurrection (cf. Herrmann, *Verkehr*, *passim*, and article in *Zeitschrift*, 1891, on *Religion und Socialdemokratie*), but to keep in the background even the name of Christ, and the fact of sin, lest we should stumble the men of culture of our time. "Should we din and vex them," says J. Weiss, "by forcing on them the name of our Lord? Nothing could be more unpædagogic than this.... We have only the choice, to give up these circles altogether, or to draw them in by leading them from circumference to centre, from ethics to religion, from work in the Kingdom of God to the understanding of the religious thought of the Kingdom of God.... The feeling of the demerit of sin and of our infinitely deep implication in it demanded in Christianity will be sought for in many men at the beginning in vain," etc.—*Die Nachfolge Christi*, pp. 175, 176, 180, etc.

† 1 Cor. i. 18–31.

"whole," and recognise the need that is widely felt, not only for a recasting of the old dogmatic formulas—less as untrue than as inadequate, though to a mind that has transcended it there is always felt to be an element of untruth in the use even of an inadequate formula—but for a new and larger grasp of Christianity as a system. We acknowledge an aspect of truth in the distinction of "religious" and "theoretic," and in the doctrine of "value-judging," though we dissent absolutely from the divorce that Ritschlianism would set up between the two domains; and we rejoice in the note of return to positive Revelation in Christ sounded by the school, and in the tendencies to a fuller confession both of the Deity of Christ, and of His work of atonement, which are increasingly discovering themselves.

Why, then, if Ritschlianism has so much that is true and valuable in it, do we still feel bound to speak of it as an imperfect and mutilated, in many respects wholly inadmissible, version of the Christian Gospel—a system which will not bear to be put in comparison in permanent vitality with the older evangelical creed it seeks to displace? It will be our object in this chapter to give an answer to this query. The evangelical faith, we would only premise, is also a system—well compacted, and in its main propositions internally coherent—a system which may not, any more than Ritschlianism, be final or perfect in its expression of the truths of Revelation, but which, in its root-thoughts at least, may claim faithfully to conserve the round of truths in the Apostolic Gospel as Ritschlianism does not. The proof of this superiority

lies partly in the fact that Ritschlianism is visibly undergoing disintegration, and moving back, in one or another of its representatives, on positions more in accord with the evangelical faith; but chiefly in the consideration of the case itself, and in direct comparison of the systems with the sources from which both are avowedly drawn.

We naturally bestow attention first on the outworks of the system—on its general pretensions, and its *theories of knowledge and religion.* The essence of its claim we found to lie in its profession to free theology from an ensnaring dependence on philosophy and nature-knowledge—from all entanglement with questions of science, criticism, history, etc. Theology, it is held, has suffered from not recognising the absolute distinctness of these two spheres—the religious and the theoretic—and from allowing the one to be influenced by the other. To this it may be replied, in general, that if Christianity deals with matters which lie also within the purview of philosophy and science—as, *e.g.*, in its theistic affirmations, its doctrines of providence, prayer, and miracle—it is impossible that the results in the two spheres should not be brought into comparison; if, as is claimed, it is an historical religion—the knowledge of which can only come to us through testimony and through books—it is impossible that it should be absolutely indifferent to questions of historical criticism.* But, waiving this for the moment, we are mistaken if it

* This is the point in the article by O. Ritschl in *Zeitschrift*, 1893, above referred to.

will not be evident from the preceding sketch that no system has less reason to boast of independence of the conditions of the age in which it had its birth than Ritschlianism. If early dogma bears on itself the imprint of its Greek intellectual environment, assuredly the Ritschlian theology is no less unmistakably a product of the conditions of thought and knowledge in the nineteenth century. The very intensity of its demand that theology and philosophy —theology and nature-knowledge—shall be separated, arises from the feeling of the acuteness of the pressure on theology of questions of philosophy and science.* The Apologists of the second century are blamed for having departed from the true idea of Christianity in seeking to present it to the Greek mind as a system of natural theology. But it may be affirmed of Ritschlianism that it also throws over large and vital parts of Christianity in obedience to the supposed requirements of modern thought. It would not be an unfair description of the Ritschlian theology to say that it is an attempt to show how much of positive Christianity can be retained, compatibly with the acceptance of the modern non-miraculous theory of the world. This is not to keep Christianity separate from modern thought, but to make a surrender to it. Accordingly the real quarrel with the ordinary evangelical view often is, not that it is an amalgamation of the Gospel with metaphysics, but —precisely the opposite of this—that, derived from Scripture, and seeking to preserve its affirmations,

* See the articles of Troeltsch in *Zeitschrift* above referred to.

it refuses to adapt itself to modern current views. The modern view of the world, *e.g.*, refuses miracle; the Scripture affirms it—therefore such a fact as the Resurrection must be given up. The modern view asserts the gradual evolution and primitive savagery of man; the Scripture affirms a "Fall"—therefore the notion of a Fall must be sacrificed. And so with every point in which collision is possible. It is the modern view which controls the Scripture statement.

"Theology without metaphysics" has an attractive sound, but Ritschlianism, as little as any other system, succeeds in realising that ideal. Through its avowed dependence on a "theory of knowledge," it is controlled at every point by metaphysics. The question, Ritschl says, is not as to *whether*, but as to *what* metaphysics is to be employed in theology,* and he, with most of his followers, commits himself to a Neo-Kantian phenomenalism. "Through this loophole," as Frank replies, "the whole of philosophy is drawn back into theology." † It is in vain to urge that the theory affects the system only in a formal respect: as our inquiry has shown, it touches its vitals in a multitude of ways. On the ground of the theory of knowledge, affirmations are made, inquiries are debarred, negations are formulated, which would

* *T. und M.*, pp. 32, 41.

† *Geschichte d. n. Theologie*, p. 296. The weight of the matter lies, Frank again truly says, not on *what* philosophical theory a man follows in his theology, but on "whether theology generally ought to be placed in such a relation of dependence on a philosophical theory of knowledge, be it what it will" (p. 295).

have no force on a different philosophical foundation. Besides, we do not get rid of philosophy by confining it, with the Ritschlians, to the *practical* sphere. The Kantian "Kritik of Practical Reason" is as much an undertaking of philosophy as the "Kritik of Pure Reason." The theory which is raised on the basis of man's moral self-consciousness is a speculative construction as truly as that which proceeds from the ideas of existence and cause.

We do not feel called upon to discuss the Ritschlian (Neo-Kantian) theory of knowledge on its purely philosophical side. The sole interest of Christianity in the epistemological question is to secure that under the name of a theory of knowledge the peculiar affirmations of faith are not spirited away, or its hold on the reality of the objects of faith weakened, and its supposed knowledge of them reduced to illusion. The peril of the Ritschlian phenomenalism is that it tends to precisely these results. We confine ourselves to the two questions which deal directly with this danger: Is Ritschlianism justified in the absolute separation it makes between theology and metaphysics, or more generally, between "religious" and "theoretic" thought? And, What is the place of the "judgment of value" in the theory of religion? The discussions which have arisen in the school on these subjects—the re-statements, modifications, compromises, to which its adherents have been compelled—already show that the position as originally taken up is untenable, but it is of some importance that we should endeavour to arrive at clearer notions regarding it.

One source of no little confusion in this discussion, we may observe, is the ambiguity attaching to such terms as "metaphysical" and "theoretic." "Metaphysics" may be used, and is used by Ritschl, in far too narrow a sense, as where he confines it to the investigation of simple "Being" (or the laws of the knowledge of being) without regard to the distinction of nature and spirit;* or, again, it may be taken in a wide sense as almost synonymous with "transcendental," so that any affirmation taking us beyond the bounds of experience, as in the assertion of the pre-existence of Christ, or of a distinction of Persons in the Godhead, or of a higher Divine subsistence of Christ—however shown to be implied in Christ's own statements, or in the facts of the Christian Revelation—is dismissed as "metaphysical." Thus we constantly hear of the "metaphysical" doctrine of the Person of Christ—the "metaphysical" Trinity, and the like. But "metaphysics" is not necessarily involved in any of these assertions.† Else the Apostles were all metaphysicians, and the "Personality of God" is itself a metaphysical proposition. If there is any subject which is more properly than another an object of metaphysical investigation, it is that of

* Cf. *Theol. und Met.*, pp. 8 ff.

† Even the definitions of the Chalcedonian Creed on the relation of natures and Person in Christ are, however much the product of the understanding, not properly "metaphysical." "Metaphysics" is just the quality lacking in them. They state propositions, guarding, as the framers believed, the integrity of a given divine fact, side by side, without the slightest attempt to harmonise them, or reduce them to a speculative unity. Cf. Balfour's *Foundations of Belief*, p. 279.

"personality"; but personality neither in God nor in man is primarily a metaphysical idea. It would prevent much ambiguity if it were understood that "metaphysics" is simply the mind applying itself to the existent from a particular point of view, that, namely, of reflective thought, with the aim of expiscating the root-notions which underlie all thought and experience, and ultimately of determining, as far as that is possible, the relation of thought to reality —with whatever conclusions may rationally be deduced from these inquiries. In one sense we cannot frame a sentence in which metaphysical notions are not implicitly contained; in another we may, and constantly do, occupy ourselves with questions in which ideas of time, space, power, cause, personality, freedom, etc.—all profoundly metaphysical—are involved, yet never give their metaphysical aspects a thought, or be even aware that such aspects exist. A similar ambiguity attaches to the term "theoretic." If this word is applied exclusively, as it very frequently would seem to be, to *methodised* thinking, especially in philosophy and science, then there are obviously large spheres of experience (not simply religion) from which "theoretic" thought is excluded. But the slightest reflection should convince us that this is an unwarrantable limitation. The theoretic activities of the mind have a far wider play than is implied in this narrow usage. It is the same activities which are at work in a methodised form in philosophy and science which are involved in every part and detail of our ordinary knowledge, without which, indeed, it would not be knowledge at all.

We cannot frame a proposition, religious or other, in which theoretic categories are not implied. How can it be otherwise when, as reflection also will teach us, reason—the possession of a rational self-conscious nature—is the condition which makes all thought and intelligent utterance possible? It is the self-same underlying reason which manifests itself in all the functions of the spirit. Only in such a nature is religion itself possible. Only such a nature could rise to, or apprehend, the idea of God. It is, therefore, not conceivable that divorce or contradiction can exist between religion and reason, or any other faculty of the soul.

The bearing of this on the Ritschlian distinction of "religious" and "theoretic" is very apparent. A relative truth, indeed, as just conceded, belongs to the distinction. What *is* true in it is that religion is in no sense a theoretical product, but has its roots deep in the soul's immediate consciousness and need of God. It has its own sources of knowledge in general and special Revelation, its own modes of apprehension and expression, its own way of regarding the world in its immediate dependence on God, and of viewing events in their direct relation to their first Cause and providential end, leaving to scientific inquiry the investigation of secondary agencies. In this it is distinguished from philosophy and the science of nature, which, as specific theoretical functions, have independent starting-points and aims, and deal with the given in experience according to methods of their own.* But this distinction is not absolute, nor can it

* But see passage from Professor Wallace below, p. 243.

be converted into a general distinction of "religious" and "theoretic." It is impossible to hold religion so apart from philosophy and science that no lines of relation are to be drawn between them. Philosophical views may be advocated (*e.g.* Materialism, Pantheism) which would exclude the Christian doctrine; scientific theories, in like manner, may be formulated which negate vital Christian positions (*e.g.* denial of the possibility of miracle, of supernatural Revelation). On the other hand, religion, while not, as just said, primarily of theoretic origin, calls forth theoretic activities, and necessarily employs them in the apprehension of its objects; in collating, systematising, and vindicating its own affirmations; in tracing their relation to truth in other spheres; and in seeking a scientific grounding of them in a general philosophy of religion, and view of the world as a whole. All this, in fact, is undertaken by the Ritschlian theologians, at the very time they are denouncing the theoretic use of reason in religion. Here, then, we may safely say, the faith of the Church, whatever errors it may occasionally have been guilty of in courting too close an alliance with philosophy (Platonic, Aristotelian, Cartesian, Kantian, Hegelian, etc.), occupies in principle a much wiser position than Ritschlianism. It rejects, and rightly, this untenable dualism which Ritschlianism would set up. It does not base its faith on theoretic reason; but neither will it place reason under the ban, or refuse what friendly aid reason can give it. It will welcome light from all quarters. It will not think a doctrine condemned because, besides being Christian, it can like-

wise be shown to be rational. It will not dress itself in the garb of Greek wisdom; but it will rejoice with Paul in any word that Greek poets have said which corroborates its fuller testimony.*

It is still necessary, before parting with this Ritschlian distinction of "religious" and "theoretic" knowledge, to give attention specifically to that aspect of it which is expressed in the term "*value-judging.*" We have learned from Ritschl that religion is distinguished from theoretic thought by the fact that it moves in independent "judgments of value." We have seen also what disputes exist in the school as to the correct interpretation of this formula—a convincing proof of its vagueness and unsatisfactoriness. In what sense, then, do we admit that "judgments of value" enter into religion? No sound theology—least of all the evangelical theology—will refuse to admit their presence in a very large degree. Religion, it will readily be conceded, is animated throughout by a strong practical motive. It aims at setting its object before it in the light which will best subserve religious ends. Its modes of representation are, therefore, warm, lively, impassioned, and make large use of

* If, therefore, it finds men, in the light of reason, seeking after God—finds, *e.g.* a strain of theistic thought, a faith in providence, a conviction of moral government, anticipations of future judgment, in pagan systems, it will not taboo these as something with which it has nothing to do, but will rejoice in them as furnishing points of contact with the Christian Revelation, and will gladly avail itself of them, as the early Apologists did, in trying to lead men to something higher. See remarks on "natural theology" below.

figurative and pictorial expression; are not, as in the case of scientific judgments, which deal with things in their purely objective relations, cool, literal, precise.* Further, religious judgment, in its higher forms, includes an element of ethical decision. It is he who wills to do the will of God who knows the doctrine.† In this respect also it is distinguished from purely theoretical cognition. Finally, since the Christian religion involves the highest moral and spiritual qualities in its objects, there is needed for the apprehension of these a suitable organ in the religious subject, and the judgments he passes on them will be, in the nature of the case, "judgments of *worth*." Only the cultivated musical ear can appreciate refined music; only the sense of the artist can do justice to excellence in painting: so only the feeling for purity, tenderness, and grace can appreciate the sweetness and grandeur of the picture of Christ presented to us in the Gospels. It is a "judgment of worth" or "value"‡ when I affirm the trans-

* In theology, of course, the effort is made to give religious conceptions the most exact and scientific form of which they are capable. To this extent its treatment is theoretic.

† John vii. 17. Even the reason employed in philosophy, however, as Professor Wallace reminds us in criticising Mr. Balfour, is not "abstract" reason, but "a reason which has been purified of dross, corruption, and sluggishness by the discipline of the sciences, by the heroism and conscientiousness of religion, by the fair and noble intuitions of art; otherwise it is little worth."—*Fort. Rev*, April 1895.

‡ An ambiguity inheres in this term "worth" or "value" (*Werth*) which is a source of fallacy. Worth may be *intrinsic*, and then is only *recognised* by us, or the term may express a *value for us* irrespective of intrinsic character. Many values

cendent moral and spiritual beauty of the Saviour's character.

"Value-judging," then, we admit, enters deeply into religion; but it is obvious that, as thus explained, it affords no warrant for the dualism which Ritschl would set up between "judgments of value" and "theoretic" knowledge; or for the statement that religious knowledge consists *only* in "judgments of value." The distinction sought to be set up, it will be observed, is one within "knowledge." But if the knowledge assumed to be possessed by religion is *really* such—and this it can only be if there is some reliable source from which it is derived,—then the judgments it involves are not merely "judgments of value"; they are "judgments of truth"—of reality or being—as well. They possess, therefore, to this extent, a theoretic side, and admit of, nay, necessitate, comparison with judgments coming from other quarters. This result is confirmed by closer analysis of the nature of the "value-judgment." In the first place, there is no such thing as a "value-judgment" pure and simple; every such judgment has a reference, tacit or explicit, to an actual object. "Judgments of value" do not hang in the air; they are connected with real objects. If I pass an æsthetic judgment on a beautiful flower, I affirm in the act the existence of the flower, the knowledge of which is given in perception; if I commend a disinterested action, I

are imputed, fictitious, artificial, conventional, or the result of association. But a genuine work of art, or a holy character, has intrinsic worth, which would belong to it though recognition were withheld.

affirm the reality of the act. Two things are evident from this: first, there is no contrariety between "judgments of value" and judgments of existence —the former, indeed, presuppose the latter; and second, there is no antagonism between a "judgment of value" and a scientific judgment applied to the same object, for the theoretic knowledge of the flower is in no way affected by the judgment passed on its beauty,—both, rather, are inseparable elements in the one act of knowledge, and are complements of each other. The knowledge of the flower would not be complete unless both were taken into account. Similarly, the moral judgments passed on acts and actors in history are in no way incompatible with the strictest veracity of historical representation—rather, are indispensable elements in a complete representation.* Provided, on the one hand, that the value is a *real* value—not one fictitiously or imaginatively imputed,—and on the other, that the description (scientific or other) is a true description, there is no collision possible. Nay, the complete theoretic view may be said to include the "judgment of value" within itself. It cannot at least refuse to take account of the elements of worth in the object, if it would not itself incur the censure of inadequacy, and may even make them the objects of its special investigation. The existence of philosophies of Art

* Ritschl himself says of the "presuppositionless" histories of Christ—"Religious faith does not run counter to a historical view of Jesus, and the historical estimate of Jesus does not first begin when one has rid himself of this faith, this religious valuation of His Person."—*R. und V.*, iii., p. 2.

and of Ethics—not to speak of Religion—are demonstrations of this fact. The spheres of religious and theoretic knowledge, in short, largely interpenetrate and overlap each other, and therefore cannot be held rigidly apart. Applying these principles to the Christian religion, we see that "judgments of value" do *not* exhaust our whole knowledge of God and of Christ, and are not incompatible with true "theoretic" judgments regarding them. Before we can state anything in terms of religious value about God, we must have some means of assuring ourselves that God *is*—that He is a Being of such and such character—that He acts in such and such a way. If we *know* this, then our statements have an objective as well as a subjective validity—they represent reality, and are not "judgments of value" only. Similarly we must know Christ historically in order to be able to recognise in Him, or be able to attribute to Him, the religious value He possesses. If that value *intrinsically* belongs to Him—is not an imaginative investment of our own minds—the statement of it can never conflict with any theoretic declarations we may be impelled to make concerning Him. It may itself be one ground of these theoretic declarations. If it be contended that the value-elements are nevertheless those which alone are of importance to us in religion—all else may be abstracted from—the answer is, that the religious value which God and Christ have to us depends on what God and Christ *are*, and even for the immediate wants of religion—much more for the purposes of theology—this cannot be profitably left in the vague indeterminateness of feeling.

It is obvious, however, that the above is a very different account of "value-judging" from that which we have before us in the Ritschlian theology. There, on the most generally accepted view, the "value-judgment" is itself the ground on which the judgment of existence is based. We conclude to the reality of the object from the fact of its value for us. Our religious judgments, in Kaftan's words, are "theoretic judgments which rest on judgments of value."* Discarding the term "theoretic" here, we can hardly doubt that this was the view which floated before Ritschl's own mind when he spoke of religious knowledge as consisting exclusively in "independent judgments of value." God is a "postulate" for the satisfaction of our moral need; Christ is held real by faith, not on the ground of a historical judgment, but because of the "impression" He produces on us.† The result of this view is to introduce a dubious element into all our religious representations. It is never clear how much is objective reality, and how much subjective construction—the mind's own way

* See the views of Kaftan, Herrmann, Scheibe, etc, in Chaps. III. and VII.

† It is not disputed that the judgment on Christ's unparalleled worth may carry with it the conviction that the person in whom that worth resides is no legendary creation, but a reality in history. The evangelical party have urged this consideration at least as strongly as Herrmann. But Christ is at the same time historically given, and our "judgment of worth" but verifies a fact objectively presented. The conviction of historicity really rests on our perception, gained from experience, of the marks which distinguish a genuine historical presentation from an invention, and not barely on a "judgment of worth," as Herrmann thinks.

of picturing objects it has itself postulated. "Knowledge," in strictness, we cannot call it, for knowledge implies objective data on which the mind reposes in its judgments and inferences. It is a mental picture of which the materials—in default of such external data—are borrowed from phantasy. This is specially manifest in the case of the idea of God, where, on the Ritschlian hypothesis, objective data altogether fail,—where we move in the region of pure postulation, and have not even the materials furnished by a traditionary narrative, as in the case of Christ.* Justly, therefore, is this theory accused by Troeltsch and others of landing us in subjectivism. Benderism is its legitimate outcome. We may state the difference between the evangelical faith and Ritschlianism under this head by saying that the former takes its religious affirmations throughout seriously as the expression of objective reality; the latter leaves

* It may be said that the same objection applies to the moral argument of Kant. From a "judgment of worth" on the unconditional obligation of the moral law, Kant advances to the postulation of a Being clothed with all the attributes (eternity, omniscience, omnipotence, wisdom, etc.) necessary in the Author and Moral Governor of the universe. It may be observed (1) that Kant has at least solid ground to start from in the presence of a morally legislative reason within ourselves, and the existence of an end which we recognise as of absolute worth. From this he is justified in rising to the conviction of a Morally Legislative Reason in the Universe, and a supreme ethical end of the world. We have no quarrel with Ritschl so long as he keeps to legitimate inference from reliable moral and spiritual data. (2) Were this the *only* ground of our faith in God, or source of our knowledge of Him, it would be exposed to the same suspicion of subjectivism as the theory in the text.

us always in uncertainty as to how much is to be discounted as mere subjective representation. And even where it is obviously most earnest in its assertion of objective truth, it fails to provide us with a basis adequate to support its assertion.

A building cannot be stronger than its foundations, and the defects inherent in the basis of the Ritschlian system leave their mark on the theology all through. We need not dwell long, after what has been said previously, on the Ritschlian theory of *religion* and *Revelation*. The general criticism to be made on the theory of religion is that, in denying an original, immediate bond between God and the soul, it strikes a wrong note at the beginning, and makes it difficult, if not impossible, to bring these into living relation after. Religion, on this theory, arises, as we have seen, not as a primary relation of the soul to God, but as a means of solving the problem of man's relation to the world. This is fatally to invert the true idea. For though religion *does* solve the contradictions of man's position in the world, this is not its primary aim. Frank says with justice that the words "God is love" were not written, as Ritschl thinks, to answer the question "how the connection of the world is to be explained, or the problem of the world to be solved." * The results we have seen in the difficulty of adjusting the relations of religion and morality, in the denial of direct communion of the

* *Die kirch. Bedeut. d. Theol. A. Rits hl's*, p. 56. The words quoted are Ritschl's.

soul with God, in the consequent ambiguity in the concept of Revelation. For how, we ask, does Revelation originate, seeing that, on the one hand, God has no immediate access to, and does not work directly on, or immediately in, the souls of men; and, on the other, there is no natural manifestation of God in His works and providence from which knowledge of Him may be drawn? The former is denied as "Mysticism"; the latter is rejected as "Natural Theology." Even in the case of Christ, as we have seen, the same difficulty recurs. In Him, we are told, we have the complete Revelation of God. Only through Him, in His historical appearance, says Herrmann, does God commune with us. Other Revelation for us than His historical Person there is none. But the question presses, How did Revelation originate even in Him? This question is not to be got rid of by taking refuge in "mystery," for the dilemma in which the theory lands us is plain. Jesus mediates the knowledge of God to us, but there is no second Christ to mediate the knowledge of God to Him. Either, then, He must have received it from some direct union of God with Him, and communication to Him; or what we name Revelation is but the thoughts of God which Christ won for Himself through a rare spiritual endowment, acted on by His special environment. The former supposition is logically condemned by the fundamental principles of Ritschl's system, and would, if admitted, isolate Christ from all His followers, to whom no such direct communion with God is supposed to be possible; the latter deprives his message of its authoritative

character.* If it be said that Christ's knowledge of God was mediated by earlier Revelation, this only shifts the difficulty a step farther back. But it conflicts, besides, with the exclusive position assigned to Christ by Herrmann and others as the *sole* medium of Revelation to us. If the Old Testament could be a medium of Revelation to Jesus, how can it be held that it is not so for us also? Jesus Himself, it should be noted, takes up no such exclusive position. He unites Himself organically with preceding Revelation,† hears the voice of God in words of psalms and prophets,‡ and in parting with His disciples promises them the Spirit of Revelation to continue His work.§ It is strange that at a time when the tendency is to enlarge the scope of Revelation, the Ritschlian theology should seem bent so rigidly on narrowing it. This last remark on the restriction of the idea of Revelation applies with no less force to the other point alluded to in the Ritschlian system—its unconditional rejection of *natural* Revelation. This rejection, it should be noticed, does not spring from anything within the Christian religion, but has its source in the *philosophical* theory of knowledge we

* One has a difficulty in understanding Herrmann's relation to Christ's Revelation on this point of authority. Herrmann will not allow us to attach ourselves to words or thoughts of others, even of Apostles (*Verkehr*, p. 30; E. T., p. 33). Are we permitted, then, to accept the thoughts of Christ? Or must we first verify them for ourselves, and accept them only so far as they appeal to us?

† Matt. v. 17.

‡ Luke xxiv. 27, 44.

§ John xiv. 26; xv. 26; xvi. 13 15.

have just been considering—the Kantian phenomenalism and the distinction of "religious" and "theoretic" knowledge. With that distinction, in the absolute form in which Ritschlianism maintains it, falls likewise the objection to "Natural Theology." The evangelical faith occupies here, again, in our judgment, a far saner, as well as more Scriptural position. It has never, indeed, been guilty of over-exalting what it calls "the light of nature," but affirms as strongly as Ritschl himself that this is "not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of His will, which is necessary unto salvation."* But it does not, therefore, fail to recognise the testimony borne to God by His works, His providence, and the natural constitution of the soul of man. The moral branch of the argument is, as we have seen, accepted in its Kantian form even by the Ritschlians, so that they also, despite their protestations, have a "natural theology." But why should *all* the modes of the divine self-Revelation in nature not have their full rights accorded to them? Why make the conscience a witness for God, and condemn the understanding to be atheist? On rational grounds, apart from the presuppositions of the Kantian metaphysic, we claim that the denial of a "natural theology" is not tenable. If God, as Ritschl admits, is the Creator, Upholder, and Moral Ruler of the universe,—He whose will, purpose, attributes, are expressed in it,—it is rationally incredible that it should not exhibit in its constitution and course some traceable indications of the Being and perfections of its Author. The

* So, e.g., *Westminster Confession*, chap. i.

absence of all such indications—if this were conceivable—would be a cogent argument for atheism.

The Ritschlian theology and the evangelical faith come to closer quarters when we advance to the consideration of the *special Christian doctrines*. Here, taking Ritschlianism on its own ground, we have to ask two questions—Which best represents the primitive Gospel? and, Which best meets the requirements of a sound theology? At first sight nothing could seem more satisfactory than the Ritschlian doctrine of God, with its keynote—"God is love"; nothing more primitive than its emphasising of the "Kingdom of God." But we must not too hastily assume that we have the thoughts of the primitive Gospel, even where Apostolic language is employed. It is well to find Ritschl affirming so emphatically the Personality of God, His creation of the world, His world-purpose in it, and His providential rule over it. It would have been better had these truths not appeared as so many "value-judgments," the grounds and theoretic validity of which we are warned off from investigating. Even in Christ, it is necessary to repeat, these thoughts did and could not rise above the level of "value-judgments," and it is left a mystery, as we have seen, how He arrived at them. We cannot see that the older theology stands one whit behind Ritschlianism in the emphasis with which it proclaims these truths, while it occupies far firmer ground, and is in every way more satisfactory, in its rejection of the ambiguities of the new theory, and its willingness to

acknowledge the light afforded by nature and reason, as well as by Revelation.

A valuable part of the Ritschlian theology lies in its endeavour to construe the Christian system from the *teleological* point of view in its doctrine of God and His Kingdom. We read continually in Ritschl of the "Selbstzweck," the "Weltzweck," the "Endzweck" of God—terms, indeed, as far removed from the simplicity of the primitive Gospel as the philosophical "Unconditioned" and "Absolute,"—yet denoting something very real and important. Still, taking Ritschl's doctrine of God as a whole, we cannot but regard it as vitally defective. Ritschl affirms, assuredly, that "God is love." Everything depends, however, on the kind of meaning put into these terms. Love, with him, as we have seen, is peculiarly defined. We are allowed to express it only in terms of will. It denotes the existence of a purpose. We are not allowed to go behind this purpose, or to speak of any nature or disposition in God from which it proceeded. God *is* eternally in His purpose—is practically identified with it. The end of this purpose is one with the end of the world, and of all moral beings. This is why God is called "love," for it is the nature of love that it adopts the ends of others as its own.* Through this equation of the purpose of God with the end of the world, we arrive, therefore,

* As formerly observed, there is a difficulty here at the outset; for if this end is ours, it is ours only because God has constituted us for it. It was His end before it was ours. We come back, therefore, to the conception of God's "self-end," which is *not* the adoption of the end of another, but the prescribing of an end *to* another.

at a conception of the love of God which may be called "static"—a merging of it into the eternal will of God to realise His world-end. It becomes little more than an abstraction of the purpose of the universe—to use an Aristotelian phrase, "the entelechy" of the universe. This, surely, is far from answering to the warmth of the Gospel conception. We may recall here what was said earlier of the limitation of the divine Fatherhood in the Ritschlian theology. The correlative of the divine love is not the race as a whole, but the community of Christ. God is Father (convertible with "will of love") only of those embraced in the fellowship of His Son. There is a truth here, if only it were placed in its right setting; but the truth for which the universal Fatherhood of God is a witness—viz., the essential kinship of the human spirit to God as created in His image—is obscured in Ritschlianism.

Then, as we saw, the remaining attributes of God are viewed in the Ritschlian system as so many phases of this primary attribute of love. Righteousness especially is defined as the consistency of God in carrying out the ends of His love, and is deprived entirely of its judicial and retributive character. This is a point on which, again, we think that the evangelical theology much more exactly conserves the Scriptural truth, while Ritschlianism obscures it. Love is, indeed, the crowning grace in ethical perfection,—is, therefore, included in righteousness of character,—but righteousness is not off-hand to be identified with love, or its notion to be regarded as exhausted by it. Righteousness has essentially to

do with ethical norms. If love is included in righteousness, it is because of its inherent ethical goodness. These norms, in a sense, condition love—limit and define its character—give it the nature and direction of a *holy* love. Nor, while love impels to the fulfilment of all duties to one's neighbour, is it itself the ground of these duties as obligations of righteousness. The theory in morals which finds the ground of all virtues in benevolence has not generally been regarded as satisfactory. Truth, *e.g.*, is an essential element in righteousness, and is to be maintained as a duty for its own sake, and not simply as a means to the ends of love. The moral law, with its categorical "Thou shalt," is neither a deduction from love, nor is annulled by love,* though under the impulse of love, obedience becomes a delight, and the constraint of "obligation" is no longer felt. If, therefore, the transgressor is punished, it is not simply as a precautionary or reformatory measure, or, as Ritschl's theory would seem to demand, an act of arbitrary violence at the close, to rid the universe of those who have proved refractory to the divine will, but explicitly as a rendering to the wrong-doer "for the wrong which he hath done."† If, finally, the divine government of the world is directed to an end of love, it is not enough to say that the course pursued is righteous because consistently directed to that end. We have to ask—

* Government by love no more annuls law in the ethical sphere than it does in the natural sphere. Love carries through its ends in a law-governed universe.

† Col. iii. 25.

What constitutes the end itself good? and must recognise that the means chosen are not constituted righteous by their fitness to attain that end, but rather have respect to norms intrinsically and inherently right, which antecedently prescribe the lines along which alone it is lawful to travel to the goal.

This brings us to glance at the divine end in question viz., the *Kingdom of God*, viewed as an association of moral beings in which the members act reciprocally from the motive of love. It is again a merit of the Ritschlian theology that it has done so much to rescue this great conception of the primitive Gospel from neglect, and to concentrate attention and study upon it. But we cannot concede that it is quite the meaning of the primitive Gospel which Ritschlianism puts into it. We have seen what variations of opinion exist within the limits of the school on the leading question whether the Kingdom of God belongs to the here (*Diesseits*) or the beyond (*Jenseits*). Ritschl's own account of it, as has repeatedly been shown, shares the fault just pointed out in his doctrine of the world-end of being altogether too abstract and formal. The sole rubric we obtain for the Kingdom is that men are to act in their relations to each other from the motive of love. But love means that each is to adopt the end of the others as his own. Here we move in a circle—a tautology. For the end, again, is just this Kingdom of God with its same abstract formula. If, to give it concreteness, we say it is the *particular* ends—natural and moral—of our

fellow-men we are to further, then we have a world of ends, indeed, but there is nothing to show how the general end is to be connected with them. If a "good" is sought, we have to look in a different direction altogether—to the idea of religious supremacy over the world; a conception equally abstract till connected with particular ends to which the freedom thus won is to be directed, and in which it is to be realised. The relations of the idea of the Kingdom of God to the Church, likewise,—left in ambiguity through the vague use of the word "community,"—need further working out. It was not without reason that in the Apostolic days this conception receded into the background—became predominatingly * eschatological—while the idea of the Church came prominently to the front. It was the outward community of believers which in that age alone represented the Kingdom of God on earth. Nay, if we ask,—What visible society even yet represents the Kingdom of God in the world? Where is the "community," the fellowship of believers, which answers to this name? we can point to no other association, or form of organisation, than the Church. Yet both in idea and in fact the Kingdom of God stretches far beyond the Church, and important ends are to be served by reviving the distinction. We doubt much, however, whether the Ritschlian theologians will succeed in establishing the Kingdom of God, as they would wish to do, as the all-comprehensive category in theology. And if the idea is to be distinguished from the Church, the notion of it as a "community,"

* Though not exclusively: cf. Rom. xiv. 17, etc.

at least under temporal conditions, must be altogether given up. The "community" aspect of it belongs, so far as we can see, wholly to the visible association of believers for directly religious purposes in the Church. The Kingdom of God, as distinct from this, though in a sense embodied in it, and outwardly represented by it,* is no "community," but a spirit, a principle, an *idea*, penetrating into, diffusing itself, working, ruling, in the minds and hearts of men. The Kingdom of God, in its mundane application, is but another name for the supremacy of God's will in human hearts and human affairs. "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."† From this rule of God in human hearts will gradually develop itself a new order of society—new relationships and institutions, a Christian state, a final brotherhood of humanity. The new spirit will embody itself in every interest and activity of mankind—in art, literature, commerce, laws, etc. The Kingdom of God is thus the ideal goal of history, even as it is already a leaven working in our midst. It will incarnate itself in, and correlate, all the ends and aims of human life. It will be a "soul" rather than a "body" in the world. The Church is likely to remain its only outward form as a distinct institution. Its consummation is in eternity.

The means by which this Kingdom of God is founded, sustained, and advanced in the world, is primarily

* Cf. Matt. xvi. 16–19; xviii. 17, 18, where there seems an identification of the Kingdom of God with the Church.

† Matt. vi. 10.

the *Gospel*—the message of God's redeeming grace to men. We have finally, therefore, to institute a brief comparison of the Ritschlian theology with the evangelical faith in their respective conceptions of the Gospel. We ask, again, how do the facts tally with the Ritschlian claim to be a witness for the purity of primitive Christianity as against later corruptions? We are afraid not well. The Ritschlian theory has been presented in the foregoing pages. Laid alongside the ample, unmistakable declarations of Apostolic doctrine in the New Testament, can its scheme be pronounced other than a highly artificial one—a product of a phase of reflection far removed from the simplicity of the early faith? We select but one notable contrast, in which it will hardly be denied that the advantage is on the side of the evangelical theology. If anything is clear about the Apostolic Gospel, it is that in it the stress was laid, not on the earthly life of Jesus, or the power of the impression of His historical image, but on the two great facts of the Death and Resurrection; that to these facts also was attached the weightiest doctrinal significance, as having altered the whole relation of humanity to God. The life and teaching of Jesus had their place in catechetical instruction, and their priceless value as example and inspiration; but the great subjects of Apostolic testimony were the facts that Christ had died, and had been raised again from the dead by the power of God, had afterwards been exalted to glory, and was living by His Spirit in the hearts of men.* There

* Cf. Paul's summary of the Gospel, "which I also," he says, "received" (1 Cor. xv. 3, 4 ff.).

was but one other fact, which bulked as largely, and that was the prospective return of Christ to Judgment. Kaftan speaks of Greek theology as shifting the centre of gravity in Christianity from the Kingdom of God to the doctrine of the Logos. But Ritschlianism not less shifts the centre of gravity in the Gospel when it lays the emphasis, with Herrmann, wholly only on the impression of the earthly life, subordinates the Cross to this, and makes light of the Resurrection, or treats it only in a non-literal sense as a corollary of faith. This may be thought to be a Gospel nearer the mind of Christ, but it is not at least the Gospel by which the Church was originally founded and spread abroad.

Without entering into too many details, we propose to test this new theology with reference to two of the greater doctrines of the evangelical faith—the doctrine of the *Incarnation*, and the doctrine of *Reconciliation*. The evangelical faith treats the Incarnation as a reality. In its view God truly became man in the person of Jesus Christ. In Him the eternal personal Word literally became flesh. There is no ambiguity, or playing with phrases, in its confession of that fact. Can the same be said of the Ritschlian theology? For the older view of the true Deity of the Lord, it substitutes, as we have seen, a "Godhead" of religious-value—of Revelation-worth. But this "Godhead" it proposes is no real Deity at all. It hides under a veil of words the fact that Christ was simply uniquely-constituted, exceptionally-endowed Man. Whatever mystery is enclosed in His Person, it does not touch this point.

Here Ritschlianism is guilty of more than an abuse of language. It asks us to value as God one who is not God in fact. It will not allow us even to inquire into what or who Christ really is, on the ground that this would involve "metaphysics." But we cannot thus stand dumb in wonder before facts of the Gospel on which our hope for eternity rests. If Christ is co-essential in nature with God, let the marvel be confessed. Let it be admitted that His Personality has a supernatural and truly Divine root; that the time-form of His existence was not the original one; that His relation of Sonship to the Father is eternal, and interior to the very life of the Godhead. Then we know where we are, and can call Christ "God" with a clear conscience, and can worship Him as such. If, on the other hand, He is a Revelation-organ of God, indeed, yet in nature entirely human—this and only this—then in honesty let us not give Him the higher name, or conceal the truth from ourselves under specious vagueness about "religious value." The issues here are precisely those of the old Athanasian controversy in the battles about the *Homoousion*. Ritschlianism seeks to create a prejudice against the ordinary doctrine by speaking of it as a product of Greek metaphysics; in truth it is but an attempt to conserve the essential truth of the Apostolic Gospel against mutilations and abridgements of which not a few of our modern theories are the hardly-changed revivals.

The all-important question, however, is not whether a theory is new or old, but whether it suits the facts. Is the Ritschlian theory of the Person of Christ

sufficient? It was undeniably not the doctrine of the Apostolic Church, but let that pass. Will it satisfy the Church now? We contend that it will not. The difference of estimate of Christ's Person in the two theologies does not grow, as is represented, out of a perverse love of metaphysics, but has its ground in a different estimate of the facts involved. The early Church held seriously those facts of Christ's resurrection and exaltation to heavenly glory which Ritschlians like Herrmann accept as "thoughts of faith," and, more consistent than they, framed its conception of Christ's Person accordingly. It found support for its view in the sum-total of the facts of Christ's earthly life—in His sinless character, His utterances, His miracles, His lofty claims, His conscious and often-expressed unique relation to the Father, His attitude of authority, His predictions of his death, resurrection, and second advent, His Messianic functions of saving and judging, His connecting of forgiveness of sins with His Person, etc. How could such an One be other than "the Son of the living God"* in a high and transcendental sense? For the first disciples, the conviction of Christ's divine Sonship grew out of the immediate impression of His Person upon them;† and when He died, and had risen, and had sent forth His Spirit, they felt that there were no predicates too exalted for them to bestow upon Him. The Church of to-day can sink to no lower estimate. We have but to think of the mass of spiritual life which rests on Christ at the present moment; on the work, and service, and sacrifice,

* Matt. xvi. 16. † John i. 14; 1 John i. 1–3.

throughout the world inspired and maintained by faith in Him; on the hopes of humanity for the future that are built on Him; and then ask ourselves, What view of the Person of Christ is needed to uphold all this? to feel that with a purely humanitarian view of Christ the Church would utterly collapse. The divine Christ of the Apostolic Gospel alone will sustain the functions of the world-Redeemer. It does not help us to eke out the dignity of our humanitarian Christ by "value-judgments." We do not really increase our stature by getting on stilts. And value-predicates in this case are but stilts to raise a little higher one who is after all but Man.

The other great pivot-doctrine of the evangelical faith is the doctrine of Reconciliation. It was remarked above that in the Apostolic Gospel the death and resurrection of Christ were undeniably regarded as having altered—fundamentally and objectively altered—the whole relation of humanity to God. The death of Christ was regarded as a sacrifice for sins—the dying of the Just for the unjust that He might reconcile us to God—a "propitiation for the sins of the whole world;" * the resurrection of Christ was the founding of a new hope, and the spring of a new life, to the race. The Ritschlian theology, on the other hand,—unfortunately, not it alone,—denies propitiation, and falls back on an interpretation of the death of Christ as a proof of fidelity in His calling, and a warrant for confidence in approaching God.

* 1 John ii. 2.

This difference between the Ritschlian and the ordinary view grounds itself, as must always be the case, on differences in the doctrine of the character of God, and in the doctrine of sin. God in the Ritschlian theology, as we have seen, is purely and solely love; of the awful holiness which abhors, and cannot but react against, and punish sin, there is no adequate recognition. In this denial of punitive justice to God, Ritschlianism falls below the Biblical standard, and lets drop elements of indispensable value in a moral view of the universe. We cannot, with whatever conceptions of the divine Fatherhood—and Ritschl has none which need form a hindrance to him—expel "law" from the bosom of God,* any more than from the conscience of man; and while it remains, the Christian doctrine of atonement will have an abiding necessity and worth. Kant is of value here, if only Ritschl had adhered to him. The effect of this changed view of the character of God is seen in the weakened estimate of sin. Sin loses the catastrophic character with which the Bible invests it; it appears as a natural and unavoidable development; as due to ignorance, it is readily pardonable;† the feeling of

* Cf. Hooker in *Ecc. Polity*: "Of law there can be no less acknowledged than that her seat is in the bosom of God," etc.

† Of course we fully recognise the element of truth in Ritschl's contention that ignorance enters largely into sin, and forms a factor in the divine judgment upon it, though not as annulling its character as sin, or dispensing with the need of a mercy which comes through propitiation.—Luke xxiii. 34; Acts xvii. 30; Rom. xii. 25; 1 Tim. i. 13. Cf. Mr. R. Greg on Kingsley's "Pelagia" (in *Hypatia*)—"So also is Hypatia, the Athenian dancing-girl and courtesan—frivolous, pleasure-loving and childish, undeveloped and soulless, because

guilt and fears of punishment which it engenders are such as a just view of the character of God must dispel. No objective condemnation rests upon the race which requires to be lifted off as a first condition of salvation.* Sin is a thing of the individual will: there is no hereditary corruption, or a penal condition of the race, involving death, as the result of an original transgression. This may be a better—we repeat that it is at least "another"—Gospel than the Apostolic. Naturally, with such a view of sin there is needed no expiation. Ritschlianism and the evangelical theology here, accordingly, decisively divide paths, and we have no hesitation in saying that the latter is not only truer to conscience, but plumbs depths in the sense of sin, and meets wants in the human conscience which the former fails to touch. To the evangelical faith, sin and guilt are terrible realities, which call forth the judgment of God against them. The sinner's consciousness of guilt but reflects an actual divine condemnation, which is even more awful in its nature and effects than his imperfect apprehensions of the evil of transgression permit him to realise. The work of Christ, therefore, necessarily deals with this as with other aspects of our sinful condition, and

untaught, unconsciously sinful, because brought up to sin, but still endowed with some original elements of God, and therefore redeemable, and in the end redeemed."—*Lit. and Soc. Judgments*, i., p. 175.

* Yet Ritschl should consistently have held this too, if, as Herrmann, etc., declare, forgiveness does not follow from love as a matter of course, but is the result of an unfathomable decree of grace. For this implies that the race is naturally perishing, and might justly have been left to perish for its sins.

aims at securing its reversal. Christ enters as a true member of the race into every part of our human lot. He accepts as His own the condemned position of our humanity; represents us in our whole relation to God; and under experience of the bitterest woe brought upon Him by sin—even the last experience of death, to which, though Prince of Life, He voluntarily submitted, and tasted its inward horror and anguish as no other child of humanity could do *—He renders to God as the Righteous One that which from our own resources we could never have yielded, and wins for us representatively a new standing, and exhaustless blessing. A mystery truly! and we are not seeking to go into the theology of it here. But in its central assertion of a valid atonement for sin, sealed by subsequent resurrection—a deed which, though not ours, we can yet appropriate by faith as removing our condemnation and reconciling us to God—therefore as our "righteousness" † before God—it is, as we regard it, not less simple and apprehensible than any affirmation in the Ritschlian theology, and is an essential element in a right conception of the Christian Gospel. This, too, we have seen, is a conviction making itself felt in many ways in Ritschlian circles; and we may hope that, imperfect as the new theology is, it may yet serve as a stepping-stone for some back to a fuller acknowledgment of Christ's doing and dying for sinners as the core of the message of salvation. ‡

* Matt. xxvi. 46; Mark xiv. 33-4; Heb. ii. 9.
† Rom. v. 17-20.
‡ 2 Cor. v. 21.

The *subjective*, in the Christian doctrine of redemption, goes ever with the *objective*—the new birth with the new standing; sanctification with justification; the spirit of sonship with the adoption of grace; moral renewal and the life of holiness with the changed relation founded on another's righteousness; and faith, in its response to the Gospel Revelation, is essentially an acceptance of Christ for *all* these ends of His salvation, and otherwise would not be an acceptance of Him for any. Faith, therefore, as Ritschlianism rightly declares, involves necessarily the changed will, and the adoption of the divine end as our own; and this carries with it an altered relation to the world, and the sense of a divine vocation. Here comes in whatever this theology has to say of service in the kingdom of God; and of faith in providence, humility, patience under trials, prayer, etc. The evangelical theology not less earnestly inculcates these things, but with the immense advantage that it lifts them clear out of the ambiguities in which they remain involved in the Ritschlian doctrine; and strikes, besides, a positive note, which the other does not, on all subjects connected with the work of the Holy Spirit (in illumination, regeneration, sanctification, indwelling, etc.). In a doctrine of the Spirit the Ritschlian theology conspicuously fails. But the evangelical theology unambiguously affirms His Personality, work, and abiding presence and power in the heart of the believer. There is in this theology a *real* forgiveness of sins, a *real* justification of the individual in believing, a *real* regeneration of the Spirit, a *real* providential care and

guidance of the believer in his way through life, *real* answers to his prayers, etc. It seeks throughout to keep in touch with fact; the Ritschlian theology, however honest in purpose, is constantly tending to sink back into the sphere of *representation*.

While, therefore, we cheerfully recognise the exceeding ability and earnestness of many of the representatives of the new theology, and gratefully acknowledge the valuable services they have in various ways rendered to theology, we cannot grant that the system they advocate has the superiority over the older evangelical faith they would claim for it, or regard it as likely soon to supplant the latter. Ritschlianism, indeed, if appearances are to be trusted, is not growing, but declining, in practical influence in Universities, and in the ranks of the clergy, as it becomes better known. Such modifications as it is receiving are of a nature to bring it nearer to the Church doctrine. Meanwhile, we can unfeignedly rejoice in the evidences of an evangelical unity of *spirit* which come to light even in the camps that seem so divided. One significant incident in illustration may be cited in closing. In his *History of Pietism* Ritschl selects for special animadversion Paul Gerhardt's favourite Passion hymn—"O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden" ("O Lamb of God once wounded")—which he thinks fails to strike the true Christian note in dwelling on the physical sufferings of Christ instead of on the inner motive of obedience.* In

* ii., p. 65.

his last hours, so we learn from his *Life*,* it was this very hymn he desired specially to have repeated to him. "I, if I be lifted up," said Jesus, "will draw all men unto Me.' †

* *Leben*, ii., p. 524.
† John xii. 32.

APPENDIX.

LITERATURE ON THE RITSCHLIAN THEOLOGY.

The following is a selection of the principal books on Ritschlian Theology referred to in the text. The editions named are those to which reference is made, unless stated otherwise, but other editions are sometimes noted in brackets. Very complete lists of the literature on all branches of the subject may be seen in F. Nippold's *Die theologische Einzelschule* (2 vols.).

PRIMARY WORKS.

By A. Ritschl :—

Die Entstehung der altkath. Kirche, 2nd Edit., 1857.

Die christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung, 3 vols., 3rd Edit. 1888–9 (references to 1st Edit. of vol. i., 1870, of which Eng. Trans.).

Unterricht in der christ. Religion, 3rd Edit., 1886 (later editions unchanged ; 1st Edit., 1875).

Theologie und Metaphysik, 2nd Edit. 1887 (1st Edit. 1881).

Schleiermacher's Reden über die Religion, 1874.

Ueber das Gewissen (1876), reprinted in *Gesammelte Aufsätze* (2nd Series), 1896.

Drei akademische Reden, 1887.

Geschichte d. Pietismus, 1880–86 (3 vols.)

Many other writings.

By W. HERRMANN :—
Die Metaphysik in der Theologie, 1876.
Die Religion im Verhältniss zum Welterkennen und zur Sittlichkeit, 1879.
Der Verkehr des Christen mit Gott, 2nd Edit., 1892 (1st Edit. 1886 ; E. T. of 2nd Edit. 1895).
Many lesser works and articles.

By JULIUS KAFTAN :—
Das Wesen der christ. Religion, 1881 (2nd Edit., 1888).
Die Wahrheit d. christ. Religion, 1889 (E. T., 2 vols., 1894).
Brauchen wir ein neues Dogma ? 1890.
Sermons and numerous articles.

By W. BENDER :—
Das Wesen der Religion, 1886.

By W. BORNEMANN :—
Unterricht im Christenthum, 2nd Edit., 1891.
Bittere Wahrheiten, 1891 (1st Edit.).

By A. HARNACK :—
Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte, 2nd Edit., 1888–90 (1st Edit., 1887–9 ; E. T. of 3rd Edit., 1893, in progress).
Grundriss d. Dogmengeschichte, 2 vols., 1889–91. Since published in one vol. (E. T., 1893).
Very many pamphlets, lectures, articles, on historical and controversial subjects.

By H. SCHULTZ :—
Die Lehre von der Gottheit Christi, 1881.
Grundriss d. evang. Dogmatik, 2nd Edit., 1892.
Grundriss d. christ. Apologetik, 1894.
Alttestamentliche Theologie, 3rd Edit., 1889 (E. T., 2 vols., 1892).

By O. RITSCHL :—
Albrecht Ritschl's Leben, 2 vols., 1892–96.
Ueber Werthurtheile, 1895.

By J. WEISS :—
Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes, 1892.
Die Nachfolge Christi und die Predigt der Gegenwart, 1895.

By H. H. WENDT :—

Der Inhalt der Lehre Jesu, vol. ii., 1890. (E. T., 2 vols., 1892.)

By Th. HÄRING :—

Ueber das Bleibende im Glauben an Christus, 1880.

Zur Versöhungslehre, eine dogmatische Untersuchung, 1893.

Die Theologie und der Vorwurf der "doppelten Wahrheit," 1886.

Many other works.

By M. KÄHLER :—

Die Versöhnung durch Christus, etc., 1885.

Der sogenannte historische Jesu und der geschichtliche biblische Christus, 1892.

Kähler's chief work is his *Die Wissenschaft der christ. Lehre.* I. *Einleitung und Apologetik* ; II. *Dogmatik* ; III. *Ethik.* 2nd Edit., 1893.

Many other works.

EXPOSITORY AND CRITICAL.

Kant, Lotze, und A. Ritschl, by L. STÄHLIN, 1888, E. T., 1889 (acute, but extreme in criticism).

Une nouvelle Conception de la Rédemption, by E. BERTRAND, 1891 (fresh, clear, readable).

Die theologische Einzelschule, by F. NIPPOLD, 2 vols., 1893 (criticises the *Leben* ; somewhat mordant ; useful for lists). See also this writer's *Handbuch der neuesten Kirchengeschichte.*

Geschichte und Kritik der neueren Theologie, by FR. H. R. VON FRANK, 1894 (posthumous). See also Frank's able pamphlet on *Die kirchliche Bedeutung der Theologie A. Ritschl's*, 2nd Edit., 1888.

Le Dogme grec, by H. BOIS, 1893 (against Astié, Sabatier, etc.).

Darstellung und Beurtheilung der Theologie A. Ritschl's, by J. THIKÖTTER, 1887.

Das System Albrecht Ritschl's dargestellt nicht kritisirt, by G. MIELKE. (This and the previous sketch are friendly.)

Die Ritschl'sche Theologie, by R. A. LIPSIUS, in *Jahr. f. prot. Theol.*, Jan. 1888 (also published separately).

Die Ritschl'sche Theologie kritisch beleuchtet, by O. PFLEIDERER, 1891. See also this writer's *Religionsphilosophie*, and *Development of Theology*.

Les Origines historiques de la Théologie de Ritschl, by H. SCHOEN, 1893 (good on the historical relations).

Die Prinzipien der Ritschl'schen Theologie und ihr Werth, by L. LEMME, 1891 (a criticism with good points).

Les Principes philosophiques de la Théologie de Ritschl, by R. FAVRE, 1891 (good on relation to Kant and Lotze, and clear and readable generally).

Vergleich der dogmatischen Systeme von R. A. Lipsius und A. Ritschl, by E. PFENNIGSDORF, 1896 (a Prize Essay: suggestive on the theory of knowledge).

(With the above should be compared F. TRAUB's valuable article on *Ritschl's Erkenntnisstheorie* in *Zeitschrift*, 1894.)

Von Schleiermacher zu Ritschl, by F. KATTENBUSCH, 2nd Edit., 1893 (an able sketch).

Die Bedeutung der Werturteile für das religiöse Erkennen, M. SCHEIBE, 1893 (should be compared with O. Ritschl's pamphlet above).

Ein Wort zur Controverse über die Mystik in der Theologie, by M. REISCHLE. (Reischle's *rôle* is generally mediating. See his articles in *Zeitschrift* on *Erkennen wir die Tiefen Gottes?* (1891), *Der Streit über die Begründung des Glaubens auf den 'geschichtlichen' Jesus Christ* (1897)].

A. Ritschl's Idee des Reiches Gottes im Lichte der Geschichte, by R. WEGENER, 1897 (on history of this idea).

Die Grundfehler der Ritschl'schen Theologie, by MAX GLAGE, 2nd Edit., 1893.

In English, R. M. Wenley's *Contemporary Theology and Theism* (1897); H. M. Scott's *Nicene Theology* (Chicago, 1896), etc.

On the Bender, Dreyer-Kaftan, Apostolicum, and other controversies, see the special lists in Nippold. Numerous articles by Herrmann, Kaftan, O. Ritschl, Troeltsch, Reischle, Sell, Ziegler, etc., in the *Zeitschrift für Theol. und Kirche* and *Die christliche Welt* may also be consulted. For further elucidation of many points connected with the Ritschlian system the author may refer to the discussions in his own volume on *The Christian View of God and the World* (3rd and cheaper edition just published, 1897).

[A new work has appeared since this volume went to press, which covers part of its ground, and is exceedingly able and instructive, G. Ecke's *Die theol. Schule A. Ritschl's und die evang. Kirche der Gegenwart* (1897). The author's standpoint is allied to Kähler's, and the spirit is irenical.]

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